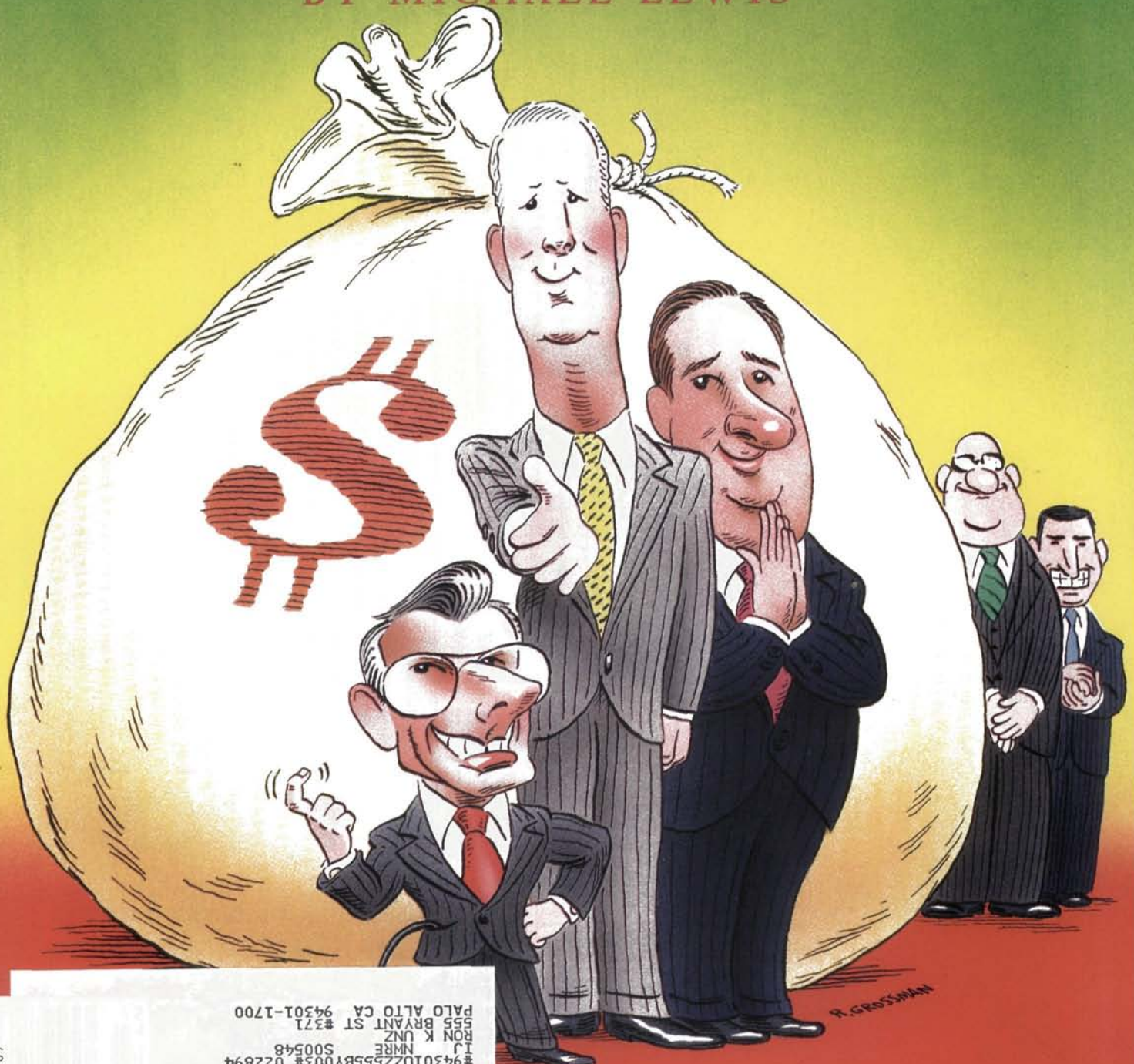
THE NEW REPUBLIC

THE ACCESS CAPITALISTS

INFLUENCE-PEDDLING IN THE NINETIES

BY MICHAEL LEWIS



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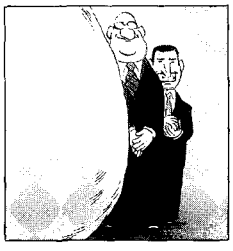

Cover by Robert Grossman for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Article on page 20.

4 **CORRESPONDENCE** The net-surfers flood in, AIPAC bites back &c.

6 **MICHAEL KINSLEY** TRB: GOP RX A look at the Republicans' health care plans.

7 **THE EDITORS** THIS MUDDLED MOMENT Clinton tries to form a foreign policy.

8 **NOTEBOOK** Raving in cyberspace, dating tips from Georgette &c.

9 **RICHARD BLOW** WASHINGTON SCENE: PHONES AGAIN Life as a White House volunteer.

10 **FRED BARNES** WHITE HOUSE WATCH: THE TURN Clinton's recovering presidency.

12 **JACOB WEISBERG** KAY BAILEY FOREHEAD The scandal of freshman Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison is not that she was indicted this week. It's that she was elected in the first place. A case-study in the new Republican degeneracy.

16 **MARTIN MALIA** THE END Yeltsin's final gambit against the remnants of the Soviet Union should have come earlier, but now it's here. A chronology of the president's strategy, and of his clandestine alliance with the Russian regions.

20 **MICHAEL LEWIS** THE ACCESS CAPITALISTS The 90s have not seen the end of influence-peddling in Washington, merely its refinement. A look at The Carlyle Group, a strange band of former pols trying to make a new living.

30 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: CLASS CONSCIOUSNESS Scorsese's lush yet thin *Age of Innocence.*

31 **RICHARD A. POSNER** OBSESSION *Only Words* by Catharine A. MacKinnon

36 **EUGEN WEBER** OF HUMAN BONDAGE *Sade: A Biography* by Maurice Lever

40 **MOSHE HALBERTAL** SPEAK, MEMORY *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust* by Tom Segev

46 **ANNE STEVENSON** POEM *Late*

47 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** WRONG NOTES *Body and Soul* by Frank Conroy

50 **ANDREW SULLIVAN** WASHINGTON DIARIST: GO WEST

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CORRESPONDENCE

E-mail

To the editors:

As a major user of the Internet, I'm intrigued by Robert Wright's article "Voice of America," (September 13). But I wonder why he focused on the Usenet news groups and not on the Internet discussion lists. There are numerous lists on both Internet and Bitnet: lists on religion (such as CHRISTIA and CONCHR-L), lists on politics (such as POLITICS and GOP-L), lists on parapsychology (such as PSI-L), lists on beliefs (BELIEF-L, for one) and Forever Knight (late of CBS's Crime-Time after PrimeTime series and soon to have its own time slot on Saturday nights on CBS) has two (FORKNI-L and FKFIC-L).

EVELYN DUNCAN
via Internet

To the editors:

Robert Wright could have written about how the Internet has changed the way people work, of which a few interesting examples off the top of my head are NCSA supercomputers used by researchers 3,000 miles distant, on-line access to library catalogs and databases, informal relay of timely news (supernova 1987A and various interesting earthquakes), the move of scholarly journals such as *Physical Review of Letters* or *The Journal of Chemical Physics* toward accepting and publishing manuscripts electronically—heck, even though I work for the University of Illinois and my wife for the University of Colorado, we manage to live in the same house, commuting via Internet. But noooo, instead we get journalism.fishwrap.sententious. Control-C please.

By contrast, the sidebar by Neal Stephenson ("Smiley's People")—hey, hire this guy—was unpretentiously delightful; the only thing worse than smileys are e-mail programs that allow (and apparently irresistibly tempt) respondents to, with a keystroke, quote an entire letter back at the sender, with embedded agrammatical one-liner commentary substituting for an exhibition of coherent writing.

CHRISTOPHER J. GRAYCE
Urbana, Illinois

Special qualities

To the editors:

I am writing this letter in response to "AIPAC Unpacked" (September 20-27, by Peter Beinart and Hanna Rosin). The authors rely on what they call "a source close to the ambassador" in claiming that I, as the ambassador of Israel in Washington, called Tom Dine for advice after his resignation because I "realized" that I "can't rely on AIPAC." This is a vicious fabrication that has no foundation in reality.

I had a very good relationship with Tom Dine when he was executive director of AIPAC, and he and I have maintained a personal and friendly relationship after his resignation, but we have never discussed AIPAC-related issues or congressional affairs since his departure.

I continue to have an excellent relationship with AIPAC's president, Steve Grossman, and his staff, and I have the highest regard for their devotion and their professional ability.

ITAMAR RABINOVICH
Ambassador, Embassy of Israel, Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

It is remarkable that in their purportedly authoritative story about AIPAC, Peter Beinart and Hanna Rosin have relied heavily on inaccuracies and innuendos gleaned from unnamed and obviously disgruntled former staff members. At the same time, they have ignored a wealth of input from me and from AIPAC's professional staff that tells a far different but eminently more truthful story.

The writers fail to understand the special qualities of American Jewish organizations like AIPAC. We have flourished by building consensus within our nationwide constituency of 55,000 members. We maintain credibility by welcoming individuals from every part of the religious and political spectrum. Many Orthodox leaders on our executive committee find common ground with their Reform and Conservative colleagues on issues relating to our core mission: strengthening the U.S.-Israel relationship. Given our commitment to openness and accessibility, Tom Dine's shockingly divisive and pejorative statements about Orthodox Jews required a decisive response. Simply put, the individual who holds perhaps the most visible professional leadership position in the American Jewish community must adhere to the highest leadership standards or he cannot serve.

The authors have ignored the fact that since AIPAC's inception forty years ago, its leadership has enjoyed productive relationships across the political spectrum. Our last six presidents have been evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans. Our present group of officers is

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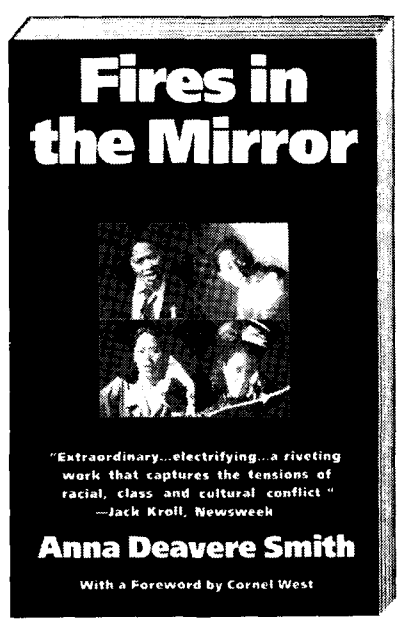
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similarly balanced. Each year at our policy conference we pay tribute to more than 250 members of Congress and administration officials who come not only out of unwavering commitment to a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, but because they respect AIPAC as a mainstream, bipartisan organization.

We believe that the close U.S.-Israel relationship and the mutual trust between the leaders of these two nations have helped create a historic opportunity for peace. AIPAC looks forward to playing a significant role in making this dream a reality in the months and years ahead.

STEVEN GROSSMAN
President, AIPAC
Washington, D.C.

Suspension of disbelief

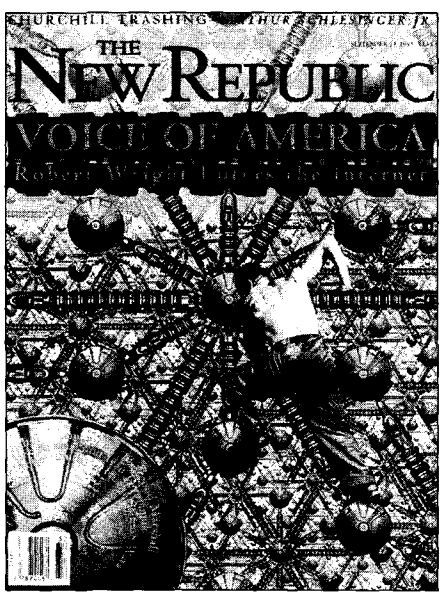
To the editors:

According to Michael Kinsley (TRB, "Martyr Complex," September 13), the disappearance of the village atheist is clinching evidence that, Stephen Carter's *Culture of Disbelief* notwithstanding, religiosity runs rampant in America, even among the liberal intelligentsia. In fact, it proves the opposite. Village atheists are rebels, and thrive only where they have something serious to rebel against. If the few remaining specimens are afraid to speak up in modern America, though, it's not because their friends and associates are religiously serious, but because, in the circles to which village atheists are most likely to be drawn, God-talk of any sort is regarded as an embarrassment. Ninety percent of Americans may "believe in God," but too many, especially among the liberals that Carter targets, regard any injection of the consequences of such belief into polite discussion as outré, to say the least.

Indeed, Kinsley himself illustrates the point with his contention that "if someone asserts that his position is based not on reason or logic but on 'God's will,' that may be right or wrong but it does make further discussion fairly pointless." A society of religiously serious folk would know, first, that the dichotomy between "reason" and "God's will" is false. Second, and more importantly, it would know that Divine Will is in fact contested terrain, because it is inevitably transmitted through fallible humans. An argument from one's "*understanding* of God's will" (Carter's phrase—tellingly not Kinsley's) is thus hardly beyond reasoned consideration or rebuttal, as is attested by religious debates on matters ranging from homosexual rights to abortion.

Of course, as we know, the heart has its own reasons, reasons too private, or too cosmic, to be brought easily into social discourse. But is the favored liberal alternative, metaphysical appeals to "rights," any different? Religious discourse can at least offer us a sense of responsibility for the world beyond ourselves; the failure of liberalism to make the case for loyalty to anything higher than the interest group lies at the root of its continuing, and disheartening, failure. Surely this is part of what THE NEW REPUBLIC's editors mean when they declare ("Notebook," same issue) that Pope John Paul II's expressed concern about the "collapse of shared moral truths ... cut[s] to the spiritual core of America's current condition." Or is theirs an America Michael Kinsley would recognize?

DAVID L. CARLTON
Nashville, Tennessee



To the editors:

For too long we've been reading overheated rhetoric in such magazines as *Christianity Today* and *First Things* about how there is a pervasive bigotry against Christians, Evangelicals, Roman Catholics or what have you.

Far too many religious followers, apparently, cannot distinguish bigotry (contempt for Evangelicals, say) from vigorous dissent (contempt for Evangelical ideas). George Will can call astrology rubbish, and he is not accused of being a bigot (except maybe by a few astrologers), but let me call beliefs in immortality and God rubbish and I am excoriated. In politics, academic disciplines and other intellectual endeavors one can use satire, mockery and exaggeration to make points. Try it with regard to religious ideas and the "martyrs" start whining about how their feelings were wounded.

Mr. Kinsley attributes the relative lack of criticism of religion in the public square to some sort of self-censorship. I doubt that. Most newspapers and magazines do not want to alienate their readers, and thus few would hire a columnist brave enough to heap calumny on their readers' most deeply held beliefs. If a column by one of the contributors to this country's leading journal of nonbelief, *Free Inquiry*, were to be offered for syndication how many newspapers do you think would pick it up? My guess, no more than a handful.

ROBERT PRUTER
Elmhurst, Illinois

Party on

To the editors:

Gay Men's Health Crisis neither endorses nor condones drug-taking and drinking in any setting, as your Notebook piece on the Morning Party (September 20 & 27) implies. But neither do we turn a blind eye to the fact that people *do* use drugs and alcohol recreationally, and that such use can pose serious risks to people's health.

What we've found in our years of pioneering work is that a prohibitionist approach—"just say no"—doesn't work. It drives the problem, and the most vulnerable people, underground. That applies to drug-taking and drinking, as well as to having sex. What does work is providing people with more realistic alternatives so they can make behavior changes.

The Morning Party brochure from which you quote out of context, "Enjoy Yourself, Don't Destroy Yourself," was written in collaboration with a well-known physician who treats HIV and AIDS, Dr. Howard Grossman, to encourage people to make informed decisions about partying based upon individual health and status limits. The brochure prompts people to think about how they use drugs and alcohol, and gives specific information about how individuals can reduce health risks by moderating drug and alcohol consumption. And, of course, the brochure repeatedly emphasizes that drug and alcohol use directly affect one's ability to practice safer sex.

Our Morning Party strategy was in keeping with the philosophy that underlies all of GMHC's efforts: not to deny that a problem exists, but rather to find practicable ways of dealing with it.

JEFF RICHARDSON
Executive Director, GMHC
ERNESTO O. HINOJOS, MPH
Deputy Executive Director of Education, GMHC
New York, New York

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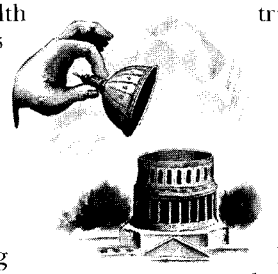
TRB®
FROM WASHINGTON

GOP Rx

If a Democrat had proposed Senator Phil Gramm's health care reform plan as recently as eighteen months ago, Senator Phil Gramm would have denounced that person as a Socialist. Gramm's "conservative" alternative to President Clinton's plan features massive new federal regulation of the insurance and health care industries; lesser new regulatory burdens on all employers; a tax increase; and a massive new government-funded entitlement program. That now represents the far-right flank of the opposition to Clinton on health care.

Many see this as good news, holding out the hope of a relatively bloodless compromise, which would be nice for a change. But before we congratulate the Republicans on their reasonableness, we should examine their fine print as carefully as Clinton's is getting poked over. For not only do the Republican alternatives share some of the virtues of the Clinton plan. They also share some of its flaws—or what Republicans choose to characterize as its flaws. And they have flaws of their own, most notably that old Republican hankering for the free lunch. This doesn't bode well for the possibility of good-faith compromise with a group of politicians who (let's face it) would not be addressing health care at all if Democrats hadn't made it unavoidable.



There are three main Republican proposals: one from the Senate leadership, one from the House leadership and one from Gramm. Unlike Clinton's, all would avoid requiring employers to provide insurance, opting instead for direct government subsidies to those who can't afford insurance. And all would avoid mandatory spending caps, preferring to control costs through increased competition. The one Republican innovation is incentives for people to buy just "catastrophic" health insurance and use tax-free "Medical Savings Accounts" to pay for routine health expenses.

The Republicans criticize Clinton for what they call his "Washington-mandated one-size-fits-all approach." I'm not sure what this means. Most of us who now get our insurance through our employers must take whatever plan the company offers. Under Clinton's system, everyone would have several options, which sounds like the opposite of "one size fits all." But perhaps they mean that under Clinton, the government would define a certain minimum package of benefits that everyone would enjoy. That's certainly true. Do Republicans not do the same?

In fact, they are vague on this point. (The Senate GOP version calls for a national commission to set benefit levels.) But their claim to "guarantee" health care to every citizen is pretty hollow if that guarantee can be satisfied by insurance that covers, say, half the cost of an ingrown toenail. If they don't like "one size fits all," the Republicans should specify what forms of care they are prepared to see some Americans do without.

Republicans also warn that the Clinton plan will deny people the right to choose their own doctors. The Clintonites swear up and down that traditional fee-for-service medicine will still be available. But the truth is that under all these reforms, Clinton's and the Republicans' alike, more and more people will find themselves in HMOs and other arrangements that limit their choice of doctors. In fact the same thing is happening now, and will continue to happen whatever comes of reform. That is the inevitable result of introducing greater price competition into the system. Republicans shouldn't claim credit for using market incentives to hold down costs without conceding that HMOs, etc., are what those market incentives lead to.

The Senate GOP version has no market-based cost restraints that Clinton's plan does not also have. That makes the Republican attack on Clinton's spending caps ("We oppose what amounts to national price fixing") ring somewhat hollow. If the Republican senators believe that competition alone can hold down prices, they needn't worry: the caps will never be hit. If they lack that confidence, they need a better cost-control device themselves.

The House and Gramm versions do have a better device. They would strong-arm people into going without insurance for the first $1,800 to $3,000 of annual medical expenses (at which point "catastrophic" insurance would kick in). This

continued on page 49

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 18, 1993

THIS MUDDLED MOMENT

Clearly stung by the criticism that has recently been directed at its foreign policy (or lack of it), the Clinton administration has just completed a three-part defense of itself. It consists of speeches given by national security adviser Anthony Lake, U.N. ambassador Madeleine Albright and the president himself at the United Nations. The texts themselves should be collected. They form a classic troika of the culture of Clintonism.

There are several questions an interested observer might ask of any new administration setting out in foreign policy: What is its analysis of the state of the world? What are its goals? Is its essential impulse pro-active or passive? Does it prefer multilateral coordination to unilateral action? Under what circumstances would it use force? Nobody expects simple responses to these questions, let alone now. And nobody expects a sudden, simple response to America's diplomatic quandaries. But one would hope for a reasonable sense of where the administration's gut lies.

Keep hoping. On almost every issue where thorny choices have to be made, the administration sees merit in every conceivable approach and understands its role as pursuing most of them. "Engagement" is an imperative insisted upon, but there is little clarity about what kind of world we are supposed to be engaged in. The climate, according to the administration, is promising, yet menacing. Anthony Lake, in a rhapsodic passage worthy of George Shultz, sees democracy and market economics as triumphant; Madeleine Albright notes that "wherever we turn, someone is fighting or threatening to fight someone else"; the president, in what must rank as one of the most pathetic rhetorical flourishes in recent memory, describes our times as "this magic moment."

The same confusion applies to the means of engagement. Multilateralism can be good or bad; unilateralism can be good or bad. "We should act multilaterally where doing so advances our interests," Lake boldly proposes, "and we should act unilaterally when *that* will serve our purpose." Albright, whose speech was by far the most vivid of the three, still insists that "we need not make rigid choices between unilateral and multilateral, global and regional, force and diplomacy." She endorses "assertive multilateralism," a phrase that should be added to "managed competition" and "managed trade" in the oxymoronic Clinton lexicography.

To be sure (as they say), Lake gives a set of priorities under the painful-sounding rubric of "enlargement." It amounts to a sensible foreign policy based on a series of concentric circles: defending the developed democracies, encouraging new democracies, getting tough with what he calls "backlash states" and dealing with humanitarian atrocities. It is a conventional version of democracy extension, but again, it refuses to confront what democracy actually means or what the trade-offs of such a strategy actually might be. On the tricky question of China, for example, he bravely proposes a relationship that "reflects both our values and our interests." On choosing between democracy and realpolitik, Lake argues that "our interests in democracy and markets do not stand alone. Other American interests at times will require us to befriend and even defend nondemocratic states." As to the tricky question of whether democracy means majority rule or an independent judiciary or social justice, Lake also goes out on a limb: "Our strategy must also respect diversity. Democracy and markets can come in many legitimate variants."

What this amounts to, so far as we can tell, is a form of pragmatic engagement that can only be judged on its results. So far, the judgment isn't exactly stellar. On the positive side, the administration has made one clear choice: for Yeltsin. And in the Middle East, it has managed to provide a context for the parties to come to a fragile deal. But elsewhere, the picture is still one of withdrawal and equivocation. The administration chose unassertive multilateralism when a sovereign country in Europe was invaded and more than 200,000 of its people killed; it is now considering sending several thousand troops to legitimize the conquest. It has failed to resolve the question of what exactly we are doing in Somalia; it has yet to move GATT powerfully forward. Clinton's prime emphasis in his U.N. speech was on nonproliferation (a worthy and politically costless ambition) and on greater caution about getting involved in U.N. peacekeeping. Although these speeches represent an attempt to stem the growing isolationist trend in American public opinion, the administration's actions speak louder than its befuddled words. Because it doesn't really have a view, it doesn't yet have a strategy. This blast of oratory didn't give it one. •

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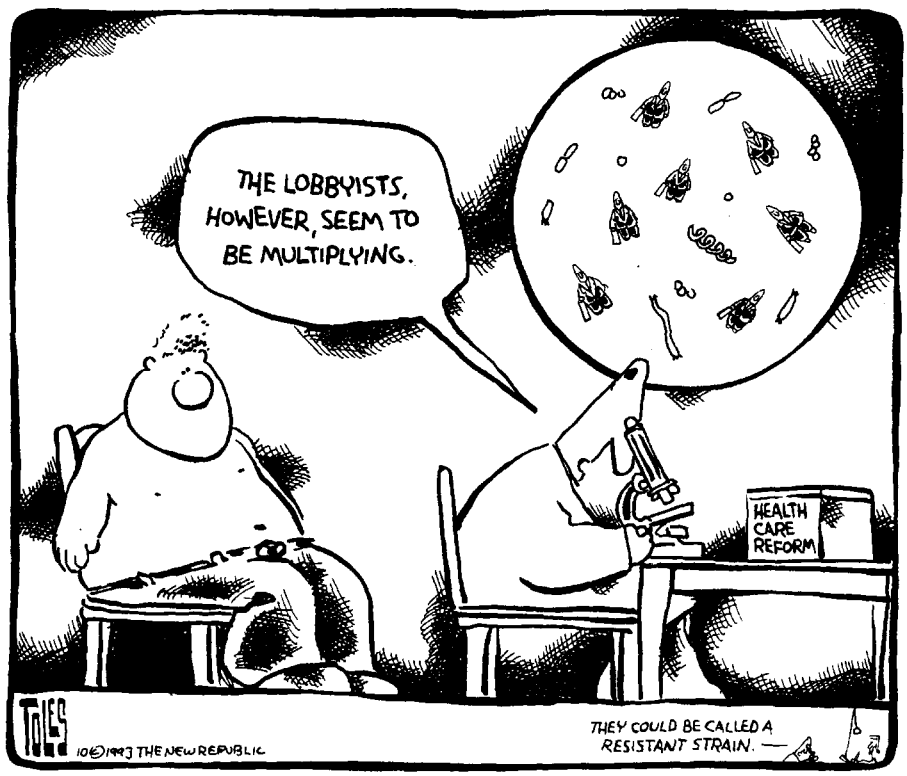
NOTEBOOK

FALLEN ASSETS: The Carlyle Group isn't the only financial firm that makes us wonder if it wouldn't be best to keep former Washington bigwigs away from the world of business (see "The Access Capitalists," page 20). The Blackstone Group, home to such former Washington heavies as Nixon Commerce Secretary Pete Peterson and Reagan Budget Director David Stockman, is, according to *The New York Times*, connected to the September 22 Amtrak disaster in Alabama that killed forty-seven people. The group has a sizable stake in the holding company that owns the tugboat that crashed into the bridge the train was about to cross. It's not the first time the Blackstoners have had *something to do* with man-made catastrophes. The *Times* notes that they were also owners of the Great Lakes Dredge and Dock Corporation—the company that drove piles into the tunnel that started the flood that ravaged downtown Chicago in 1992.


THE LOBBYISTS, HOWEVER, SEEM TO BE MULTIPLYING.
HEALTH CARE REFORM
THEY COULD BE CALLED A RESISTANT STRAIN.
TOLES
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PEACE (AND LOVE) TREATY: There are probably a few arguments against NAFTA. Whatever they are, though, they were certainly lost on Representative Marcy Kaptur, Democrat of Ohio, who offered this deep textual analysis of the pact: "[T]he word 'people' does not really appear in the agreement," she said. "The word 'democracy' is missing from the agreement." But, she went on, "there are plenty of words that are repeated often in the agreement, words like 'investment,' words like 'G-7 currencies,' words like 'intellectual property rights,' not words you use around the dinner table every evening."

THE LAST BATTLE: The final vote on gays in the military in the House of Representatives was a tantalizing twist on the whole controversy. The Meehan Amendment, arguing that Congress should not codify the ban in the harsh language of Sam Nunn, but leave it to the president's discretion, garnered 39 percent of the House. Added to the thirty-three votes in the Senate that supported a similar Boxer Amendment, it's clear that the White House, if it had had the will, could have found the votes to veto Nunn's final gambit, and sustain the veto. If Nunn's codification turns out to affect military policy adversely, the Clinton administration must now realize it has only its own final lack of determination to blame.

VENTURE CAPITAL IS A GIRL'S BEST FRIEND: "Robert also recalls that on our first date I conveyed a certain combination of glamour and directness. He liked that I was both very feminine and very blunt at the same time, even when I said things that might be found provocative. (For instance, he thinks it's cute that, on an early date, I informed him point-blank that I knew he was a member of the *Forbes* 400.)" —Georgette Mosbacher, writing about her courtship with her husband, Robert, Bush's commerce secretary, in the September *Cosmopolitan.*

RAVERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!: Surfing the superhighway of information technology threatened to obliterate the desire for sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. But after a recent dance party in Brisbane, it seems the joys of cyberspace may simply complement these traditional vices. Billed as an "InterRave" to help indigenous people from the Sarawak region of Malaysia ("The people will be seen. The people will be heard," promised advance notices on the Usenet newsgroup alt.rave), Australian ravers used the Internet to reach out to hackers and phreaks all over the globe. While D.J.s transmitted musical selections and lyrics, partiers typed ecstasy-inspired greetings on computer terminals that surrounded the dance floor. Messages of solidarity from virtual participants in places like Houston and Helsinki flashed on overhead projection screens, and everyone stayed on-line, or on their feet, for the next thirteen hours. As of press time, however, there has still been no reaction from authorities in Kuala Lumpur. •

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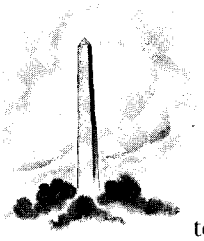
WASHINGTON SCENE

PHONES AGAIN

By Richard Blow

I have come to the White House Volunteer Office—Room 77 of the Old Executive Office Building—because I have succumbed to the tug of national service. But first I have to be interviewed. Ever since one volunteer started writing pro-gay messages on outgoing mail, the White House has interviewed and conducted background checks on prospective workers. "Most of the work we do here is very banal, very boring," says my interviewer, who usually works at the Department of Labor. Volunteers handle the White House comment line: "Some of the comments can be racist or homophobic or conservative." Other tasks include phone-answering, mail-sorting and gift-handling. "They get some beautiful vases," my interviewer remarks. She jots down my Social Security number and the names of three references and I leave.



Five weeks later, I get the call (none of my references has been checked). I am to come as soon as possible. I do. What follows is the true story of my days in the Clinton administration.

Day One: I am dispatched to OEOB, Room 111 1/2, where, I am told, there is no receptionist. Room 111 1/2 turns out to be the NAFTA "war room," and not only is there no receptionist, there is nobody at all. The entire staff has jaunted off to the White House signing ceremony for the NAFTA side agreements. I peruse a bulletin board covered with the travel schedules of Cabinet members and the dates of Ross Perot's T.V. appearances. I consider lifting some White House stationery and calling European friends. But conscience wins out: I answer the phones.

Mario Cuomo's office calls. Can the governor get copies of the side agreements? I don't see why not. Transportation Secretary Peña's office calls. The secretary needs the NAFTA talking points. ("The packed East Room event showed that support for NAFTA is picking up steam," etc.) I'll fax them. Senator John Kerry wants to talk to William Daley, who's heading the NAFTA fight. What about? I innocently inquire. "NAFTA," Kerry's secretary says laconically. She appears to think me an idiot, but I'm not. I'm a volunteer.

A staffer's mother calls, and we chat for a while; I am starting to buckle under the pressure.

Representative Jim Backus wants to meet with Daley to discuss "NAFTA's effect on citrus." I inform his assistant that NAFTA will prompt a citrus boom, but she seems unconvinced. A woman calls from the East Gate of the White House, irate because her name is not on the guest list for the ceremony. I empathize, admitting my own lack of clout. She is unconsoled. Meanwhile, a fax has arrived: a Chicago lawyer, a friend of Daley's, wants a job for his son.

Day Two: Room 77 sends me to Room 22, the mailroom. About twenty-five other volunteers sit around long tables on which stacks of letters are piled high. The room feels like Tuesday night bingo: I am the youngest volunteer by at least thirty years, and the only man. President Clinton, my supervisor tells me, receives some 6,000 letters a week, far more than George Bush got. The president wants every letter answered, so the White House has a system. Staffers have categorized the incoming letters and written some 200 responses. That way they can computer-generate a letter that looks personal. The categories include: "Pardon for Leonard Peltier," "General Concern re: morality (Abortion / Gays / Church and State)" and "Views re: Whaling Industry"—the movie *Free Willy* has prompted a flood of letters. On a more personal note are "Pure Support / Congratulations / Love" and "Allergies—Concern and Suggestions."

My job is to read and categorize. The responses are then sent out with an auto-penned signature. I wade through a bundle of letters. A group of Marylanders has sent a petition lamenting rising cable rates. A Satan worshiper has scribbled pentagrams. A deluge of form letters espouses the value of chiropractors. The code for form letters is "NRN"—No Response Necessary.

Day Three: Room 170, the communications office. Phones again, and they never stop ringing. Reporters want the scoop on health care. The only person who looks relaxed is media guru Jeff Eller, who strolls about the office juggling a Nerf football. There's a briefing for regional reporters in two days. Is it on the record or off? No one knows. What time is it? Another good question. A college reporter from New Jersey wants to know which airport is closest to the White House. This I can do. The other receptionists tell me calls for Jeff Eller are very important and should be transferred to a special number. I don't know how to transfer calls. Someone calls for Jeff Eller. I cut him off. Later, I lift heavy boxes.

Day Four: This time it's the health care "war room." Phones. The offices are unspeakably busy. Staffers scurry about like short-order cooks. Various special-interest types demand copies of the president's health care plan. They seem certain that, since congressional staffers leaked the plan to the press, the White House will do the same for them. I rebuke them. Calls come from doctors convinced that Hillary wants their input. A surly woman from Georgia calls to gripe about her hospital. I suggest she phone her congressman. She keeps me on the line another five minutes, until I mention that, here at the health care task force, we have work to do. "What's your name, young man? I'm going to tell my congressman about you." "Jeff Eller," I say.

RICHARD BLOW is a Washington writer.

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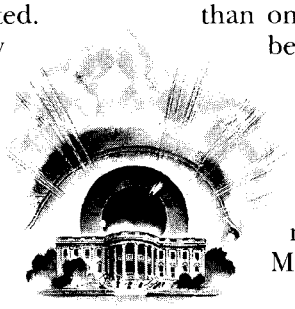
THE TURN

By Fred Barnes

The day before President Clinton was to deliver his nationally televised address on health care, he and Hillary Rodham Clinton balked at the draft they'd been tinkering with for three days. Speechwriters Jeremy Rossner and David Dreyer, not the authors of the draft, were summoned to revamp it. Luckily, they snatched a moment with Hillary Clinton—ten minutes, no more—that afternoon. She said the speech needed a structure for explaining the complicated Clinton program. Organize the speech around the six principles mentioned in the first draft, she suggested. They complied, and the speech suddenly became coherent. That evening they presented the text to counselor David Gergen. After reading it, Gergen spotted the president crossing the street outside the White House and coaxed him into Gergen's basement office. Clinton said the text was close to what he wanted. But he was still making pencil changes as late as his limo ride to the Capitol to deliver the speech.



In spite of the chaotic process that produced it—and the brief moment when another text ended up on the TelePrompter—the speech was a rousing success. Organization isn't everything at the Clinton White House. True, there's more of it than in the early days. Mack McLarty, the White House chief of staff, forced unfriendly factions on Clinton's staff to work together. "I just will not tolerate a lack of cooperation and collegiality," he says. He lectured staffers about professionalism in hopes of cutting down on mistakes. He convinced Clinton that the staff functions effectively without presidential micromanagement. All this contributed to Clinton's higher poll ratings and increased respect on Capitol Hill. But better management isn't the main reason Clinton has turned a corner in his presidency.

As early as last June, the president assured aides the fall would be better. Issues would do it. Clinton figured his health care plan would be a hit, driving up his popularity. This, in turn, would lend strength to his lobbying efforts on the North American Free Trade Agreement. Also, "reinventing government" would be a useful political issue. Clinton understood that all these were bipartisan issues. He wouldn't take the pounding he did from Republicans on taxes and spending. Those issues are on Republican turf. When they're the focus of attention, Republicans benefit. When health care is, Democrats gain, especially a Democratic president. Clinton was also lucky. No extraneous issues—Bosnia, Somalia, an economic bump—intervened.

It helped that the White House made no egregious mistakes. If a Republican president had experienced Travelgate, the suicide of a senior official and the LAX haircut, he'd still be suffering. Congressional committees would be conducting investigations and hearings. In Clinton's case, these faded as soon as the press lost interest. There were opportunities for new mistakes. Clinton came to the brink of war with Rush Limbaugh. When talk-radio hosts were invited to the White House on September 20, Limbaugh declined but sent a camera crew. After a background briefing, the crew briefly filmed a White House conference room, then stopped when asked to. But an aide confiscated the crew's camera, precipitating a confrontation. Deputy press secretary Lorraine Voles defused the situation by returning the camera and admitting that the White House had erred. End of fight.

McLarty deserves some credit for mistake avoidance. "We've got a stronger organization, more mature and seasoned," he says. "We've learned how to string more than one bead at a time." He managed this while being an unobtrusive chief of staff. John Sununu he's not. "I've tried not to be the autocratic gatekeeper." McLarty shares, rather than hoards, power. There's a division of labor. Gergen took the Tokyo summit. George Stephanopoulos did the planning for the Israeli-PLO peace accord signing. McLarty worked on getting the budget passed.

The turn for Clinton began in Tokyo in late June, while McLarty was back in Washington plotting budget strategy. Clinton didn't want to go to the economic summit, though attendance wasn't optional. "He didn't think it would be productive," says Gergen. He was worried about how he'd stack up against Helmut Kohl, Francois Mitterand, etc. He did fine. And Clinton achieved a mini-triumph by signing a framework agreement for trade talks with Japan. The agreement was vague, but Gergen made the idea stick that Clinton had won important concessions. One of the negotiators told Gergen he had witnessed a shoving match between Japanese bureaucrats, with one side accusing the other of yielding too much to the Americans. Gergen immediately leaked the story as tangible evidence of Clinton's progress in dealing with the Japanese.

Returning to Washington, Clinton was handed a bound volume of strategy memos on the budget fight from deputy political director Joan Baggett, communications deputy Dreyer, Deputy Treasury Secretary Roger Altman and nearly a dozen others. The aim was to show the president that his aides were prepared, and thus allow him, as one adviser put it, "to concentrate on his own performance." It didn't quite work out that way. Following the budget win, Clinton and his top aides held numerous post-mortems. The conclusion was that Clinton had been too immersed in details. "He became the mechanic-in-chief," says Gergen. Clinton agreed this

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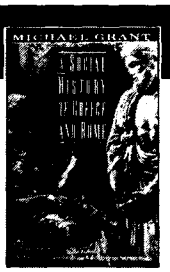

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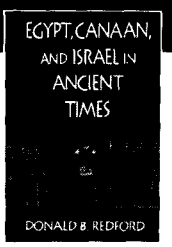

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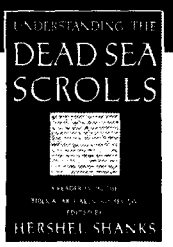

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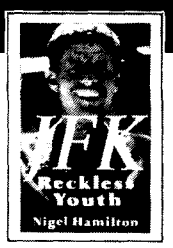

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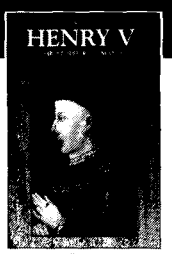

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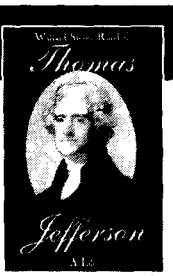

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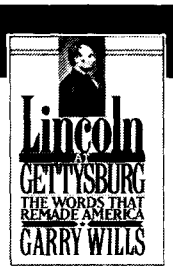

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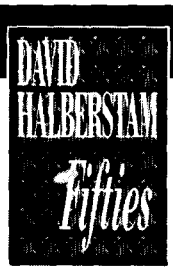

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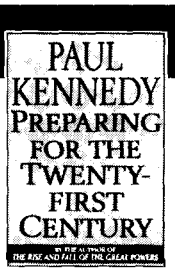

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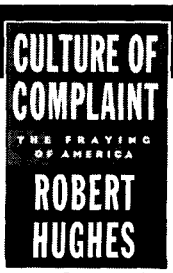

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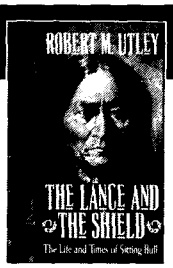

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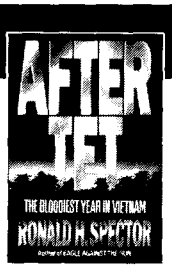

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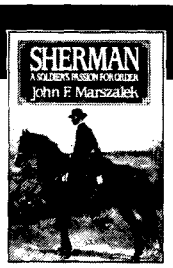

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wasn't the role he should play. He decided to change.

Since returning from his Martha's Vineyard vacation in August, "he's been on a higher plane," insists Gergen. But not always. His health care town meeting featured the old detail-obsessed Clinton, staying hours to answer the most minute of questions. The next day, Clinton tried more high-flown stuff, extemporizing during a speech on crime: "The more personally secure you are, the more you feel good about who you are and your connections to other people and your roots in a community, the more you are able to change." Afterward, he told Gergen to send a transcript of the remarks to his speechwriters so they'd know what he now wants to talk about.

Turning a corner is not the same as winning the race. The new issues, chiefly health care, are ones he cares about and that work for him. But his health plan is vulnerable on many counts: new layers of bureaucracy, price controls, questionable financing. And while Clinton acknowledges that overexposure has hurt him ("Sometimes less is more," he told Brit Hume of ABC), he'll have trouble resisting the lure of the T.V. camera. Still, who'd have thought he'd have revived his presidency this much by early fall? Not I. •

Republican degenerate.

KAY BAILEY FOREHEAD

By Jacob Weisberg

On September 27 a Texas grand jury indicted the newest member of the Senate, Kay Bailey Hutchison, on five counts of records tampering and misuse of public office. The felony and misdemeanor charges stem from her tenure as state treasurer, when workers on the payroll of Hutchison's office made fund-raising calls for her campaign on state time and used a state computer to keep track of contributions. Well, tut, tut, to be sure. But in Texas, where standards of political ethics remain something short of those in, say, Wisconsin, this sort of incident is hardly a disfiguring blemish on one's career. And in truth, the possibility of petty election-fiddling is far less troubling than another aspect of the junior senator from Texas: the utter vacuousness of her views.

In person, Hutchison seems almost an automaton, releasing a trained, expressionless smile, but concealing any spark of human warmth. Columnist Molly Ivins calls her "The Breck Girl." Her perfect dyed-blond hair, perfect makeup, perfect suits and perfect stockings give her an anchorwoman's sheen; think of Connie Chung crossed with Georgette Mosbacher, but icier. Hutchison's utterances are equally smooth. And they have a kind of surface plausibility. But if you press a bit deeper, they dissolve into the kind of gibberish spouted by Congressman Bob Forehead, the big-haired, finger-to-the-wind Republican in Mark Alan Stamaty's "Washingtoon."

The lack of idiosyncrasy and spontaneity are echoed in Hutchison's personal history, at least as she tells it. Hutchison grew up in the Gulf Coast town of La Marque, where her father had an insurance business, headed the chamber of commerce and made small contributions to both political parties. As she recalled in an interview last week, her primary interests growing up were ballet and cheerleading, the latter remaining her abiding passion throughout college and into law school at the University of Texas in Austin. She adopted her father's bipartisan politics, voting for Goldwater but serving as a summer intern for a Democratic congressman, Clark Thompson. She took the job on "a lark," as she says, and it failed to spark an interest in politics. She remained focused on "cheerleading, football, football players." After law school, which she says made her more serious, she was unable to get a job with any firms in Texas. Instead, she found work as a television reporter in Austin.

Hutchison's big break was an assignment to interview Anne Armstrong, who had been made a co-chair of the Republican National Committee in 1971. Armstrong became Hutchison's patron, hiring her as her press secretary in Washington. Soon thereafter, Hutchison was drafted to run for the Texas legislature in Houston as a Republican, and won. In 1972, at 29, she found herself with a budding political career. "She had no politics. She invented it out of whole cloth," says Jim Hightower, the former Texas agriculture commissioner. Indeed, it's difficult to see what other than ambition motivated her. The senator doesn't offer much in the way of elaboration herself. She says she went into politics because she "enjoyed covering it." Asked about her political heroes, she names only Armstrong. Asked for more classic figures, she mentions them all: Adams, Madison, Jefferson, Lincoln and Washington. Why? "I read a lot of biographies and did certainly appreciate what the early people did," she says.

After two terms in the legislature, again with Armstrong's help, Hutchison was appointed by President Gerald Ford to a patronage seat on the National Transportation Safety Board. She had no experience in the field, and resigned the sinecure in 1978 to return to Texas to marry Ray Hutchison, a Dallas bond lawyer who had been her deskmate in the legislature and who was running for governor. He lost in the Republican primary, but helped to finance her subsequent career. In 1982 Kay Hutchison ran for Congress and lost. She then worked as a corporate lawyer with her husband, became the director of a bank that failed and invested in a series of unsuccessful businesses, including a furniture showroom and a candy factory. Having flopped in business, she tried politics once again, running for Texas state treasurer in 1990.

Her election carried a strong, if typically Texan, whiff of sleaze. A rival candidate, Tom Bowden, was backed in

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the Democratic primary by some business associates of Ray Hutchison. When Bowden lost the primary, he endorsed Hutchison in the general election. She won, and hired him to work for her. Texas newspapers have reported that Bowden bragged to colleagues that he and Hutchison had a deal giving him the job in exchange for his political backing.

There was also favoritism toward political supporters. Daniel Cook III, a Dallas partner of Goldman Sachs, was a key fund-raiser in her treasurer's race; he and his firm gave her $22,000. After the election, Hutchison handed Goldman Sachs a contract to underwrite a $300 million state bond issue on a no-bid basis. "I did not take money from Goldman Sachs until we had finished doing business with them," Hutchison said at the time in a less than confidence-inspiring defense. (Cook was finance chairman again for her Senate run.)

Hutchison was dubbed a national figure at the 1992 Republican Convention in Houston, where she gave the opening address. The GOP had yet to lose the White House, but Hutchison's speech laid the groundwork for the degeneracy that has come to characterize the Republican party in presidential exile. On economic issues, this means oppositionism without a better idea: a bluff against spending in general, but without specifics, and boundless demagoguery about taxes. On social issues, it means meticulous positioning in relation to poll data and the Republican party's own factions.

In her campaign for the Senate, which followed soon after, Hutchison evolved a set of positions that, while barely coherent, perfectly suited the circumstances. Democrats tried to portray her as "Phil Gramm in a skirt." But the portrait failed because Hutchison, as one Democratic consultant points out, "carefully nurtures her differences with Gramm." Most importantly, she developed a position on abortion that offered something to every side of the debate. She thinks the government should not prohibit abortions, but doesn't call herself pro-choice and opposes the Freedom of Choice Act. She is against public financing of abortion, and supports waiting periods and parental consent for minors. Her position is as nuanced as Mario Cuomo's, but without the candlepower. Asked whether her views have evolved, she says they have, as "the issue has evolved." Asked how her position used to be different, she becomes flustered. "I feel that I'm where I always was. That's how I feel."

For a Republican, such a position is hazardous mostly in the primary stages of a campaign. Pro-life absolutists are activists and are disproportionately powerful within the party. In the February Republican primary in the special election to fill Lloyd Bentsen's seat, Hutchison's strongest opponents were Jack Fields and Joe Barton, two avid right-to-lifers. With the pro-life vote divided, she conquered. David Beckwith, a college friend who went down to manage her campaign after the forced retirement of his previous boss, Dan Quayle, worked with Karl Rove, a GOP political consultant who also works for Phil Gramm, to help turn the issue to her advantage. Their strategy was to emphasize that Hutchison's view was moderate, while her opponents' views were all extremist. "When one side would attack us, we'd try to get the other side involved, too," Beckwith says. In the general election, Hutchison emphasized the pro-choice element in her views. While the pro-choice group NARAL supported her Democratic opponent, Bob Krueger, Hutchison got the backing of WISH, a group that finances pro-choice Republican women. The National Women's Political Caucus, which sometimes endorses men and might have sided with Krueger stayed out of the race.

Hutchison sounded all the "outsider" themes of the previous fall's campaign. She came out for term limits—though she never explained why she supported them. She joined Ross Perot's United We Stand and Perot himself supported her candidacy. But mainly she ran against Washington, trying to turn the election into a referendum on Bill Clinton's proposed tax increases. With the president's approval rating at 17 percent in Texas, her election was a cakewalk. The only issue that ever came close to threatening Hutchison was her temper; she was accused of pinching one employee and pummeling another with a notebook when she couldn't find a phone number fast enough. She successfully turned the issue around, saying the charges were being made only because she was a woman. The temper is real, however. (It flared during our interview, when she snapped at Beckwith, who sat in, for attempting to leave the office at 8 P.M. She ordered him to come back to deliver a "report," as if he were a naughty child who hadn't done his chores.)

Since the election, Hutchison has sought out the middle ground on other social issues as well. She supports financing for the National Endowment for the Arts, but favors restrictions on grantees. She switched her vote to support Carol Moseley-Braun's position against renewing an insignia patent for the Daughters of the Confederacy. Though she is opposed to gays serving in the military ("eruptions that happen when there is sexual attraction are not suited for military life," she says), she supported Thomas Payzant, a Clinton nominee to the Department of Education, who banned anti-gay Boy Scout troops

continued on page 16

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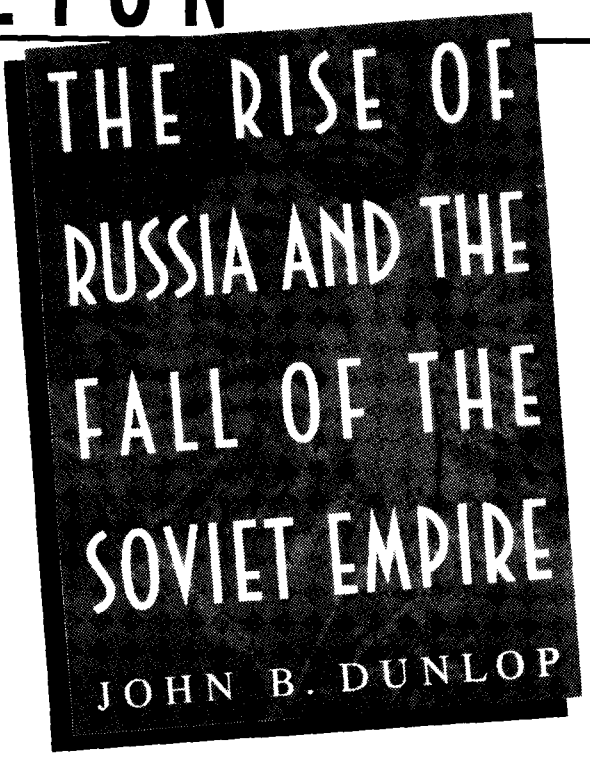

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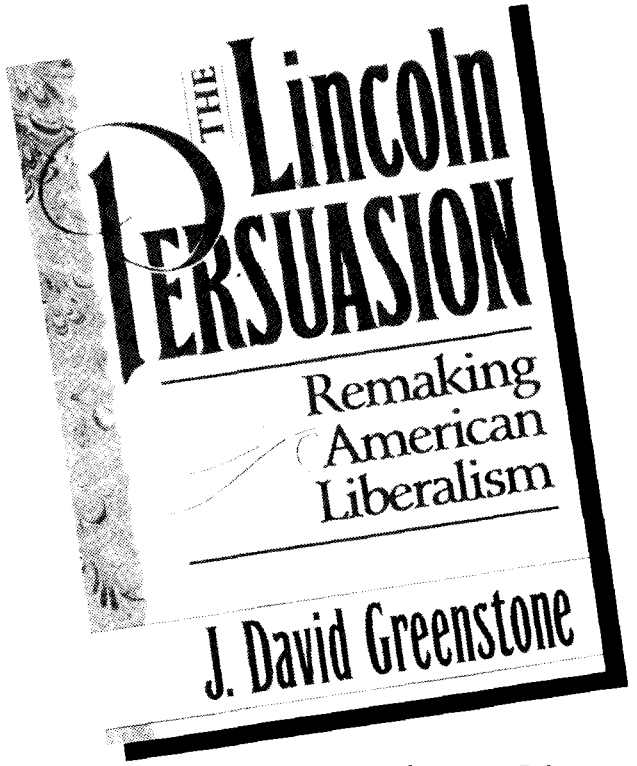

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when he was an education official in California.

Yet as deft as she is at judging prevailing currents, thinking on her feet is not a strong suit. Asked whether gays should be able to adopt children, she lapsed into a stunned silence for more than a minute. This is a long time in a half-hour interview. Outside her window, the leaves turned brown. Icicles formed, then melted. David Beckwith appeared to be in great pain, Quayle memories doubtless flashing through his mind. Finally, she ventured that heterosexual parents are preferable. But if no straight parents are available, are gay parents better than no adoption at all? "I don't want anything I say to be misconstrued. I'm just not comfortable making all of the judgments," she said testily.

On economic issues, Hutchison is every bit as political, but less coherent. The one consistent thread in her philosophy seems to be her loathing of public spending. In an August op-ed in *USA Today*, she wrote, "We may thus have a rare opportunity soon to address the No. 1 problem of our national government—overspending. That opportunity must be seized." Yet she has no real plan for cutting the budget. Her proposals—a 10 percent reduction in government overhead, limiting the overall growth of spending to 2 percent a year and zero-based budgeting—are a farrago of failed and insubstantial ideas. Though she says the overhead cut would save $45 billion a year, she has been unable to get the Congressional Budget Office to verify any such figure. Her idea for a 2 percent limit on the growth of spending is even less plausible. She says she doesn't mean it to be an across-the-board cut, and would exempt programs affecting seniors. She prefers to cut "obsolete" programs entirely. But what programs she won't say.

Indeed, when it comes to trimming anything in particular from the federal budget, Hutchison seems to be adamantly against it, at least if the item in question has anything to do with Texas or Texans. She is one of the chief champions of the superconducting supercollider and the space station, arguing for the latter on the creative, if far-fetched, grounds that it will advance breast cancer research. As for the supercollider, Hutchison had the audacity to write to Clinton in July, excoriating him for not working hard enough to promote it—even as she railed against the White House for failing to cut spending. She wants to protect agricultural subsidies and keep the base closing commission far away. She also supports welfare reform and national service. But instead of proposing a way to pay for them, she has a bill to repeal the retroactivity of the tax hikes in Clinton's budget.

Perhaps sensing the contradictions in her views, she recently changed her position on spending completely. When I spoke to her, she said that though it would have been desirable to cut spending and not raise taxes, now that taxes have been raised, she doesn't wish to lower spending for fear of harming the economy. She would postpone all cuts indefinitely. Like Ronald Reagan, she professes that government is too big, but never tries to make it smaller. She has other Reaganesque qualities, too. In August, Hutchison ran into Jesse Jackson. "What a pleasure to meet you, Mr. Secretary!" she exclaimed.

In other words, but for her legal troubles, Hutchison has all the makings of a successful Republican politician. Party leaders consider her a rising star, and a number of them say that if her next move isn't probation, it could be the White House. One political consultant told me that Hutchison would be the perfect Republican nominee for vice president in 1996. Not only is she a telegenic woman, but one who can appeal to both moderates and conservatives. She would be the perfect counterweight to a pro-life man at the top of the ticket.

Texas Democrats are hoping the trial, forecast for late spring, will spell the end of this sort of talk. Even if she is acquitted, they hope, the prosecution will bloody her enough so she can be beaten when she stands for reelection in 1994. But the charges against Hutchison also have the potential to work in her favor, and to some extent already have, because her offenses sound so petty and because her nemesis, a district attorney named Ronnie Earle, is an ambitious Democrat who wanted Texas Governor Ann Richards to appoint him to the seat Bob Krueger got. Earle has a reputation as a fair-minded, zealous prosecutor, and he has gone after prominent members of his own party for less. But it still looks to many Texas voters like the Democrats are up to their old tricks, trying to claim in court what they couldn't win at the ballot box.

A conviction may get Hutchison out of the way, but unless her ideas are challenged, a dozen more Forehead Republicans will rise to take her place. Many Texas Democrats, however, are too complicit in her evasions to challenge her effectively. Krueger, for example, was unwilling to defend Clinton's budget, running away from the president while Hutchison ran against him. This is a sure recipe for defeat, even for a candidate better than Krueger. Hutchison may have broken the rules. But her biggest fault isn't corruption. It's blather. •

Yeltsin's unfolding coup.

THE END

By Martin Malia

Crises in Moscow recur with the regularity of the seasons, yet it seems the only outcome of one crisis is to set the stage for the next one. The events of this September, however, are different: they mark the end of a cycle that began with the fall of communism in August 1991.

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and a hegemonic military-industrial complex, with its caste of *nomenklatura* managers. In the polity, the impediment was the hegemonic Communist party and the hierarchy of nominally elected administrative assemblies, or soviets, from the local level to the national Congress of Peoples Deputies and its standing Parliament, the Supreme Soviet. Both problems were all the more intractable, since the two were in fact one.

The political facet of this problem seemed to have been solved by the August 1991 collapse, which resulted in the banning of the Party and the confiscation of its property. So the hitherto relatively cooperative network of soviets was left in place. To abolish the Parliament, to hold elections and to pass a new constitution, would have required time; and the democrats were in a hurry to ride their August momentum to attack the problem of economic transformation.

With the political front apparently secured, Yeltsin and his young prime minister, Yegor Gaidar, threw all their weight onto the economic front by launching "shock therapy" price liberalization in January 1992, an attack followed later in the year by a drive for the privatization of industry. Their aim was not just to revive an imploding economy; it was to build a new society. And this revolutionary ambition, by the spring of 1992, galvanized the Congress, the Parliament and the lesser soviets into resisting Yeltsin's government.

The ensuing confrontation unfolded in three phases. The first extended from April 1992 to December, a time when the Parliament, through its control of the Central Bank, sought to undercut the reform by lavish credits to state industry. The outcome was an inflation rate of 2,000 percent for the year, or just shy of hyperinflation. This phase culminated in a constitutional crisis at the December Congress of Peoples Deputies. In the concluding compromise of the Congress, Yeltsin sacrificed Gaidar to keep "centrist" support; in exchange, the Congress agreed to an April referendum on the constitutional delineation of executive and legislative powers.

The second phase extended from December 1992 to March 1993, a time when Parliament reneged on the April referendum and moved to overthrow Yeltsin himself. This "creeping coup d'état," as Yeltsin called it, was answered by his counterattack in March 1993: leaving Congress and Parliament in place, he declared emergency rule to secure a referendum. Although this half-coup was adequately planned in advance, its execution was half-botched; Yeltsin, narrowly avoiding impeachment, again sought consensus with his adversaries.

The resulting compromise gave Yeltsin a new referendum for April 25, but the Congress structured it to make a clear victory for him impossible—or so they thought. Of the four questions, two—on confidence in Yeltsin himself and confidence in his economic program—required a simple majority for approval; the other two—on early presidential and legislative elections—required an impossible majority of eligible voters to be binding. The result, however, was an unexpected moral victory for Yeltsin: he and his policies won clear approval; an overwhelming majority of voters wanted early parliamentary elections, while less than half called for similar presidential elections. Yet none of this was legally binding. The momentum of the April referendum, therefore, was soon dissipated, thus inaugurating a third phase of more desultory confrontation extending to the September coup—and the end of the parliamentary charade.

This delayed outcome raises a number of questions: Why did Yeltsin take so long to capitalize on his April victory? Will he once again fritter away his advantage in futile compromise with uncompromising adversaries? And, even though he has won this round, will his latest coup prove a Pyrrhic victory, since the past two years of guerrilla warfare have so undermined the Russian state that it is now beyond salvaging?

The general answer to these questions is that the very weakness of the post-Communist Russian state compels constant negotiation and compromise to keep government functioning at all. Put more concretely, since this state lacks the the power either to command or to provide for society, particular interests have become sovereign, whether they are the old *nomenklatura*, the new entrepreneurs, the mafia, rogue military units or Russia's eighty-eight regions and autonomous "republics." In such a situation, even with the moral victory of the April referendum, it is doubtful Yeltsin would have had much active support for abolishing the Parliament.

He therefore adopted a more indirect strategy. This new tack was to build a base of support for a draft constitution by making an end run around the Parliament to the increasingly powerful regions. This draft provided for a bicameral legislature: a lower house (Duma) to represent the population at large, and an upper house (Federation Council) to represent the eighty-eight regions and republics. The draft also proposed strong presidential power. To get this system approved, Yeltsin convened two representatives from each region to serve as a proto-Federation Council, a body that met on June 6.

Each delegation had one member from the local legislature, or soviet, and one member from the local executive. Like the Congress, these soviets had been elected in March 1990 on what was technically a democratic suffrage, but at a time when the Party could easily determine the outcome; like the majority of Congress deputies, these delegates were usually adherents of the old order. Conversely, some of the local executives had been democratically elected along with Yeltsin in June 1991, while others were appointed by Yeltsin in the wake of the August collapse. But whatever their background, these delegates would support Yeltsin only at the price of increased powers for their regions.

With this heterogeneous body, Yeltsin sought to negotiate a document with sufficiently broad appeal to win over enough members of the existing Congress to secure its constitutionally valid ratification. And in fact, there were defections in the Congress to his cause. At the same time, though, the regions drove an increasingly hard bargain. The leaders in this were the nine-

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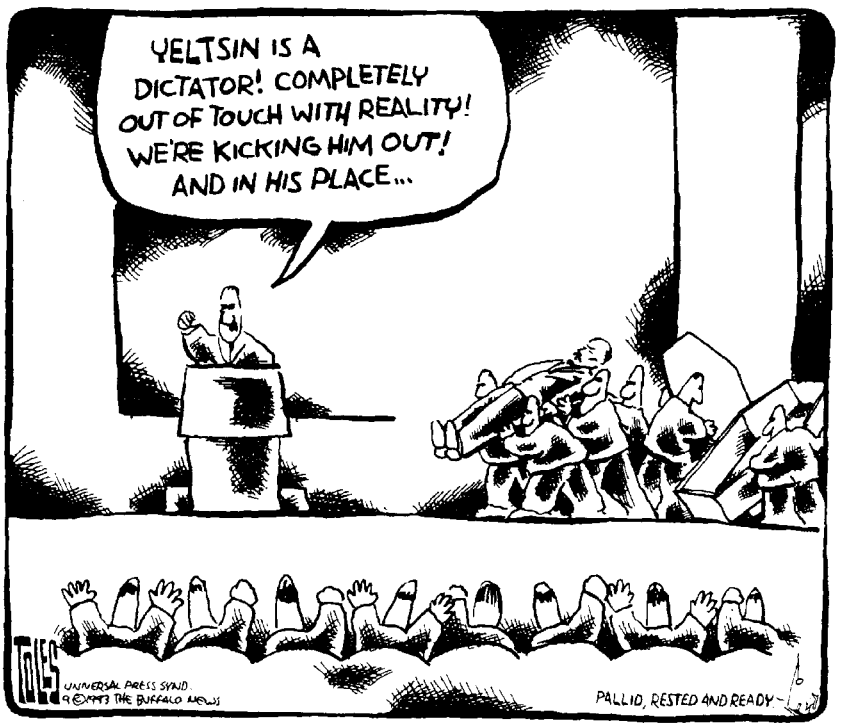
teen autonomous republics, and the leader among them was Tatarstan. Exploiting the old Soviet pretense that as "republics" they were quasi-states, they demanded the right to negotiate bilateral treaties with the federal government, to share control of defense factories within their borders and to secure rights to their territories' oil, gas, gold and diamonds. The Russian regions, often more populous and richer than the ethnic "autonomies," resented such preference and often claimed republican status, too. In July, Yeltsin's old region of Sverdlovsk declared itself the Urals Republic; Vladivostok wanted to become the Maritime Republic. All this was not because these Russian regions seriously contemplated secession, which was expressly excluded by the draft constitution; it was because the regions wanted control over their local resources in a situation where the government could no longer provide for their needs.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So negotiations continued until July 12, when a draft constitution was initialed by most of the regions and republics. In the same month Yeltsin came home from the G-7 meeting in Tokyo with the $43 billion aid package he had long sought. Still, the constitution was not formally ratified, and no date had been set for new elections. Yeltsin went off on vacation, his new strategy seemingly on track, if not yet at the station.

Ruslan Khasbulatov and the Parliament seized this moment to throw the switch with a coup d'état by economic means. The deputies passed a budget that tripled the deficit for 1993. They annulled a presidential decree obliging state-owned enterprises to exchange 30 percent of their shares for citizens' privatization vouchers; and they voted to take away control of the privatization program from its radical young author, Anatoly Chubais.

They did all this, moreover, at a time when the economic reform had acquired its second wind. Under Gaidar's successor, Viktor Chernomyrdin, the real economic strategist was another young radical, Boris Fyodorov. In the first six months of 1993 he managed to rein in Viktor Gerashchenko and the Central Bank; the danger of hyperinflation receded as the monthly inflation rate fell from almost 50 percent to 35 percent.

A second stage of Parliament's coup followed on July 19. With Yeltsin still at his dacha and Fyodorov in Washington, the Central Bank withdrew all rubles printed before 1993, with only a week for the population to exchange $35 worth of the old currency for new. After Yeltsin and Fyodorov rushed back to Moscow, the monetary "reform" was attenuated, but is was not rescinded.

So, the central government was further discredited and economic reform again imperiled. A more fortunate casualty was the quest for consensus. The Parliament now appeared so absurd that it was at last possible for Yeltsin to cash in his April chips. During the next six weeks he methodically prepared for a coup that would be free of the equivocations of his March action. In mid-August he warned Parliament that legislative elections would take place in the fall, and later said openly that September would be the month of decision. He cautioned the regional leaders that Russia was not to be cut up "like a slice of Swiss cheese." He assumed de facto control of the Central Bank. On September 1 he suspended his vice president and rival, Aleksander Rutskoi. From the way the September events unfolded, it is clear that he also secured support of the heads of the military and security forces.

Until the weekend of September 18, the regional leaders were pressed to approve the new constitution immediately, though here Yeltsin failed to achieve his goal. More successfully—some would say ominously—beginning in mid-July the Commonwealth of Independent States developed a new cohesion under Russian leadership: the three Slavic states signed an economic alliance; on September 7 six former Soviet republics reconstituted the ruble zone. But the most significant signal came on September 16 when Yeltsin recalled Gaidar as deputy prime minister.

In short, when Yeltsin went on television on September 21 to dissolve Parliament and set legislative elections for December 11 and 12, he did so with a well-prepared plan of action and a renewed policy of economic reform. And he soon put his own job on the line, for the third time in as many years, in elections for next June 12.

Yet there remained the problem of legitimacy, for the coup was unconstitutional under the terms of the Brezhnev-era documents still in force. This problem was confronted head-on: that is, Yeltsin admitted that the September action was extraconstitutional, and justified

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it with what amounted to the Lockean and Jeffersonian argument that there are times in the affairs of men when a dangerously incompetent government may be legitimately deposed to defend society's vital interests.

And this middling-hard coup worked. Parliament failed to form a counter-government and wound up cut off from the country. All the agencies of the central government, and all foreign governments, rallied to Yeltsin's side. The regions, as was only to be expected, were divided, with most of the executives supporting Yeltsin and the soviets largely leaning toward Parliament. The regions therefore pressed for the compromise solution—again—of concurrent legislative and presidential elections. Yeltsin refused this, and it seems he was not bargaining, while he was adamant that Parliament had to go. What might the positive results of his victory be? And its costs?

First, the anomalous situation under which Russia has labored for the past two years has ended. It is now clear that such a Communist institution as a polity of soviets cannot be adapted to the purposes of a "normal society." New legislative elections will no doubt be held (approximately) in December, and whether presidential elections are conducted concurrently or next June is secondary: in the new political order both president and Parliament will have equal legitimacy. Moreover, real political parties with genuine constituencies will at last have soil in which to grow.

Yet will this central government have a country to govern? Almost assuredly yes, but the country's new constitution will take time to emerge. The regions are still carving out their sphere of competence, and much of their ambition is legitimate. A country as huge and diverse as liberated Russia requires independence from Moscow for optimal development.

But after a year or two more of devolution of power from the center, the regions will need to negotiate new relationships with their neighbors—and with the central government—for their practical interdependence is quite real. Thus, eventually they will rebuild the state from the bottom up. Indeed, this has been Yeltsin's realistic policy ever since he started knocking the Soviet Union apart in 1990-1991. The recent re-emergence of a ruble zone is a signpost on the road back. And the reassertion of a Russian military presence along the old Union periphery—in Moldova, Abkhazia and Tajikistan—may be another, less reassuring, portent of the same tendency.

For the course of true revolution never did run smoothly, but always mingled the negative with the positive. We will not know the balance sheet of Russia's August revolution for some years to come. For the moment, however, we can say that this September's necessary coup was the most positive blow struck for a "normal society" since August 1991 itself.

MARTIN MALIA is author of the forthcoming *The Soviet Tragedy* (Free Press).

Influence-peddling: the next generation.

THE ACCESS CAPITALISTS

By Michael Lewis

When you first meet David Rubenstein, you have to force yourself to remember that as a young staffer in the Carter White House he believed that the best thing in the world to be was a public servant. In those days he was known mainly for his unwillingness to go home at night. One of his former White House colleagues describes him as "the personification of the sheer, boring insistence that enables people to rise to the top." He himself says that he was "the first one to arrive on the first day of the administration and the last one to leave on the last," though he didn't, as was rumored, actually live in his West Wing office. He became famous, briefly, when a magazine article described his ascetic daily regime, which included eating dinner from White House vending machines. "Machine food is underrated," he said. That did it. A sperm bank called from California and asked him to contribute a specimen.

But then Carter lost and Rubenstein became just another Washington lawyer, peddling influence on behalf of clients he didn't care about with causes he didn't believe in. "I found it demeaning," he says. "It was legalized bribery. You'd go up to talk to a senator and the minute you got back to your office the phone would be ringing and it would be the senator's aide asking when you might be able to throw a fund-raiser." So in the middle of 1987 he and Stephen Norris, a Washington lawyer who worked for the Marriott Corporation, opened their own merchant bank.

"Merchant bank" is a term of art that obscures more

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than it describes; the one thing merchant bankers don't do is bank. Rubenstein and Norris planned to insinuate themselves into the Wall Street fad of buying companies with money borrowed from real banks: leveraged buyouts. It hardly mattered that neither man had any experience on Wall Street. By the middle of 1987, just about anyone could rent space and declare himself a financier, and just about anyone did. "I thought I had a pretty good I.Q. myself," says Rubenstein, "and people were making a lot more money than me who I thought maybe weren't so smart."

Six years later The Carlyle Group—the name was inspired by the New York hotel and chosen because, like "merchant bank," it sounded old and established—holds a majority stake in a dozen or so companies, which employ about 45,000 people and generate about $5 billion in revenues annually, principally from the United States government. But what Rubenstein has done is in a way less impressive than whom he's done it with. He employs former Secretary of Defense Frank Carlucci, former Secretary of State James Baker, former budget director Richard Darman and many lesser rolodexes: the son of Bahrain's ambassador to the United States, a former U.S. ambassador to NATO and so on. Colin Powell is the most recent big shot considering an offer from Carlyle. Former Treasury Secretary Donald Regan, former Bush Campaign Chairman Fred Malek, former first son George Bush Jr., former CIA Director Robert Gates and current SEC Chairman Arthur Levitt are advisors to, investors in or board members of Carlyle's companies. Vernon Jordan and Bob Strauss, the Tweedledee and Tweedledum of Washington Insiderdom, are on the list of references Carlyle includes in its press kit.

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The Carlyle Group, in short, has become a kind of salon des refusees for the influence-peddling class. It offers a neat solution for people who don't have a whole lot to sell besides their access, but who don't want to appear to be selling their access. "Jim Baker wouldn't have joined us if we lobbied," says Rubenstein. The former Carter operative is right. He is able to attract political celebrities such as Baker, Carlucci and Darman precisely because he has found a way to exploit their connections without seeming to be doing so. Almost unwittingly, he has helped to create the finest specimens of a new social type: the access capitalist.

The access capitalist enjoys a number of advantages over his progenitor, the Washington lobbyist. For a start, he stands to become very rich, very quickly. The lawyer-lobbyist merely rents his influence. The access capitalist effectively sells the present value of all his influence, in perpetuity, each time he makes a phone call. What's more, the access capitalist can plausibly represent himself as a higher social type—a businessperson rather than an influence-peddler—which gives him an edge if he decides to return to politics. But perhaps best of all for those who have spent their lives in politics, the access capitalist doesn't really need to know much about business. Wall Street has proved brutal to the many beginners, such as David Stockman and Larry Speakes, who have gone there to work from Washington. That true capitalism requires something more than connections is the source of Carlyle's appeal: only a merchant bank that trades more on whom one knows rather than on what one knows can provide a real home for the access capitalist.

My first meeting with the man who runs what must now be the best game in town occurred beneath one of the English hunting scenes that decorates his lobby. Rubenstein has an almost charming disregard for conventional charm. He shakes hands unhappily, his eyes aimed into his carpet. He doesn't often smile; when he wants to convey the idea of a smile, he grimaces. This he did as he began his monologue, which lasted four hours, with a couple of short breaks for questions. It opened:

> I've thought more about what I was going to say to you than I do before I go in to negotiate a deal. Everyone you've

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talked to has called me. I figure you will go one of two ways with your story. You could write a story saying, what are all these former government officials doing making all this money? Or you could say, who are *all* these bozos who think they know how to manage money? I called Jim [Baker] and asked him what he thought about your story. He said there was no way that you were going to write anything nice about us because THE NEW REPUBLIC hates him.

Now, [he grimaces brightly] if you were writing for another publication you could write a story about how all these smart guys had got together and were making all this money. You ought to think about that. You could tell it as an adventure story. How a bunch of smart guys got together, raised $5 million and started something....

He then went on shallow background to dispute what I thought I had learned about The Carlyle Group. First he argued that he and his partners, most of whom had no previous experience in finance, had made so much money that they would never be able to spend it all. Then he reversed himself, sensing perhaps that quick success was implicitly damning: the more successful they were the more loaded the question of whether Jim, Frank, Dick and the others had been exploiting their connections. The conversation flipped back and forth. One moment Rubenstein was rich, the next he was poor. One moment The Carlyle Group was struggling to make ends meet, the next it had amassed profits of more than $1 billion in just six years. Four or five times he stopped himself to say, apropos of nothing, "I don't spend money. I don't enjoy spending money. The car that I drive is an 11-year-old Honda." On and on this went, while outside, the rush-hour traffic on Pennsylvania Avenue collected and then dispersed.

The way Rubenstein tells it, the creation of Washington's leading merchant bank was good old-fashioned American entrepreneurship, similar to, if more modest than, Bill Gates's founding of Microsoft. But this is one of those half-truths that contains even less truth than a lie. The Carlyle Group has passed through several distinctly original phases of money-making, each more grandiose than the last, none of which would have occurred in a properly functioning capitalist economy. The first of these was what is known jokingly around the Carlyle office as The Great Eskimo Tax Scam of 1987. The Great Eskimo Tax Scam grew out of a brief, curious tax loophole that permitted Alaskan companies owned by Eskimos to sell their losses for hard cash to other American corporations. By offsetting the Eskimo losses against their gains, American corporations were able to avoid income taxes. All of a sudden there was a business in matching up profitable American corporations with Eskimos. Rubenstein and Norris spotted the window of opportunity and leapt through.

Since no one likes to pay taxes, finding the corporate buyers was easy. The trick was to flush out the loss-making Eskimos. Through a friend in Washington, Rubenstein plugged himself into a group in northern Alaska that had discovered a dubious technique for showing tax losses on idle property. (The Internal Revenue Service now challenges the validity of the Eskimos' accounting.) To persuade the Eskimos to deal with him, Rubenstein flew them to Washington and put them up in a fancy hotel on the condition that they listen to his pitch. In less than a year Rubenstein and Norris shuffled between $1 billion and $2 billion dollars of dubious Eskimo losses into profitable American companies, for which they took a 1 percent fee, or between $10 million and $20 million. "I wouldn't be surprised if they made more on that than they've made on everything else since," says a Carlyle associate. According to Rubenstein, "It gave me and some of the others here the confidence that we could compete in the investment world." Still, he only acknowledges his debt to the business of tax avoidance after the subject has been raised. The official company literature—and his own oral history of the firm—fails to mention The Great Eskimo Tax Scam.

About the same time he was romancing the Eskimos, Rubenstein was raising $5 million from a handful of big investors, mainly friends. ("David really leveraged his old political connections to raise money," says a friend who watched him do it and who, like nearly everyone else in this article, spoke only on the condition of anonymity.) At least part of his appeal was that he would be able to exploit the false, but common, perception among foreign investors that they need Washington insiders to facilitate their American business deals. Explaining to *Forbes* in 1991 why he had committed funds to such an unusual operation, Arthur Miltenberger, the chief investment officer for the Mellon family, Carlyle's most important investor, said, "I was intrigued by a merchant bank based in Washington, D.C. Foreigners have to come to Washington." (The son of the Mellon family's general counsel now works for Carlyle.)

But Rubenstein wanted to do more than just grease the skids in Washington for credulous Arab sheiks and gullible Japanese real estate tycoons. In 1987 the big money was being made in leveraged buyouts. As if inhabited by some rogue virus that transforms people into creatures of the zeitgeist, Rubenstein, former devoted assistant domestic policy advisor to saintly ex-president Jimmy Carter, hired a few bright young men to analyze publicly traded companies. When they found one that seemed undervalued, they staged a raid.

In September 1987 The Carlyle Group, represented by Drexel Burnham, made their first bid for Chi-Chi's, a chain of Mexican restaurants, but ended up losing out to a rival bidder, also represented by Drexel. They made bids for several other companies in various industries, rewarding themselves and their backers modestly and annoying corporate managements greatly. "What do they add to the picture?" an executive of one Carlyle target, a defense firm called Fairchild, asked a reporter for *The Washington Post*. "These aren't guys who know the industry." Though their desire to purchase companies (with borrowed money) was sincere, they seemed relegated to the role of small-time greenmailers.

While it was true that in the 1980s a lot of people without much business experience made a great deal of

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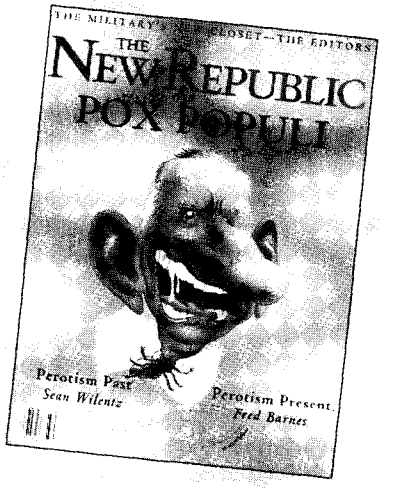

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money buying undervalued companies with money borrowed from banks, The Carlyle Group represented an extreme case. Even after their hiring, in the summer of 1987, of William Conway, a highly respected chief financial officer from MCI Communications (actual business experience!), they had little credibility with bankers or sellers. One of the biggest investors in leveraged buyout firms told me that he has refused to finance their ambitions, "principally because they didn't have enough experience actually doing it." Says an investor who gave them money for one aborted hostile raid, "Was it a successful experience? Not really. I wouldn't do it again." Finally, toward the end of 1988 Carlyle spent $90 million to acquire a New Jersey chemical company called Oakite Products, but only, as the firm now admits, by paying far more than it was worth.

What transformed The Carlyle Group from a collection of third-stringers in the leveraged buyout jamboree into a thriving enterprise of a kind that had never before existed was, oddly enough, a political scandal. Fred Malek was forced to leave the Bush campaign after *The Washington Post* revealed that in 1971, as a young aide to Nixon, he had toted up the number of Jews in the Department of Labor statistics. (Nixon suspected a Zionist conspiracy there.) Malek was friendly with Norris and Daniel D'Aniello, another Carlyle partner, from his time at the helm of the Marriott hotel chain, and he sought temporary asylum in the firm's offices. In early 1989 he persuaded his fellow Republican, Frank Carlucci, recently retired as Secretary of Defense, to join the firm.

When Carlucci came on board, the defense industry was in turmoil, with as many as fifty-five different businesses for sale. To profit from the disarray, Carlyle needed to secure invitations to the sort of private corporate sales in which the price is kept down by the absence of bidders. "Everyone in our business is trying to figure out ways to avoid getting into an auction ... run by Wall Street," Rubenstein explains. "Get into auctions—that's the way to lose a lot of money. That's why Baker, Darman and Carlucci are so valuable to us." Pressed to explain why a CEO looking to sell a division of his company would entertain the call of a former Cabinet officer over one from a businessman, Rubenstein says, "Let's suppose you're the CEO of G.M. and you get a call from Baker. You think, 'Hey the former secretary of state wants to come out and have lunch with me. I'll get the photographer out ... have my picture taken.'"

In other words, Carlyle's chief innovation was to insert the former defense secretary systematically into leveraged buyouts. Carlucci was ideally suited to the task. He still had a bit o' the old glitz. He possessed a reservoir of goodwill with the defense contractors who were the main sellers of businesses. (The result, no doubt, of his having spent billions of taxpayer dollars on items for our national defense.) And his presence conferred a self-fulfilling financial credibility on a deal. "Somehow bank presidents are reassured when they learn there is someone involved who can place a call," says a leading defense industry analyst. "An assurance from Carlucci that this business is sound is more influential than the best financial analysis.... There's an awful lot of atmospherics in this business."

Over the next four years The Carlyle Group was able to exploit Frank Carlucci's connections within the industry, and within the Pentagon, to turn itself into one of the twenty-five largest defense contractors in the world. In September 1990, a year or so after Carlucci joined the firm, The Carlyle Group paid $130 million for a defense consulting subsidiary of Ford Aerospace called BDM, which Ford had bought two years before for $425 million. (The CEO of BDM, a close friend of Carlucci's named Earle Williams, threatened to walk out with his top management unless his owner sold him.) In March 1992 Carlyle paid a still-undisclosed sum for Vinnell Corporation, which trains the Saudi Arabian Defense Force and allegedly has ties to the CIA. (The company was owned by another friend of Carlucci's.) In August 1992 Carlyle paid $215 million for Vought Aircraft, which makes parts for the B-2 bomber and the C-17 transport plane. In October 1992 Carlyle paid an undisclosed sum for GDE, an electronics division of General Dynamics. (Carlucci sits on the board of General Dynamics.) In July 1993 Carlyle paid $400 million for Magnavox, a military electronics division of Phillips. (Carlucci is friends with—and, again, formerly a big customer of—the CEO of Phillips.)

Rubenstein claims—and others confirm—that The Carlyle Group earns returns on these companies of between 40 percent and 60 percent a year. This is, of course, in addition to the several million dollars in fees that it bills the companies for the privilege of being acquired.

Perhaps a more telling indication of the value of Carlucci's connections is how much better the firm has done with defense companies than it has with the businesses it acquired without the same edge in access. After the disastrous purchase of Oakite, the firm paid $300 million to Sears in April 1989 for the real estate brokerage firm Coldwell Banker. Immediately the real estate market crashed, Coldwell's revenues plummeted, $107 million in equity value vanished and shares owned by Coldwell's employees (similar to those purchased by Carlyle) fell from $10 to $2. For their next trick, Carlyle sunk $24 million of equity into a chain of radio stations called Four Seasons Communications; nearly all of that money is now gone. Also in 1989, the firm bought Caterair, the world's largest in-flight catering business, from the Marriott Corporation. They billed the company $8.6 million for the privilege of leveraging it to the hilt; but then the airline industry fell out of the sky and Caterair lost several big customers to bankruptcy. (Rubenstein claims to have hidden profits in the company of $250 million. Another investor in the deal, when I related the number, laughed and asked, "He really said that?" Wall Street's nickname for Caterair is "Craterair.")

Probably only Rubenstein and his partners know for sure whether their gains in defense offset their losses elsewhere. In late 1989 three of the firm's original four

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major institutional investors asked for their money back, leaving the Mellon family as the sole outside partner. In 1991, according to two well-placed sources, Carlyle almost failed to meet its payroll; the firm was saved by a $2 million fee from a Saudi prince whom they had represented during the Gulf war in the purchase of shares in Citicorp. (Rubenstein denies the payroll crisis.)

Though Rubenstein announced several times over the next eighteen months that Carlyle was raising two investment funds totaling $2.3 billion, the firm failed to raise a dime. The main reason is that it hasn't completed a successful leveraged buyout by selling a business back to the public for a profit, presumably because there have been no profits for the taking. Rubenstein puts a noble face on the situation, saying that he is a long-term investor who does not want to sell: "If we were in the business of cashing in we'd have sold BDM," the most successful and most advertised of his acquisitions. This would be more admirable if it were more true. By prior agreement with the seller, Carlyle is not permitted to unload BDM until sometime in 1994, and Carlyle partner William Conway told me that the firm would probably sell BDM as soon as it could.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

What Rubenstein freely admits is that there is no money to be made buying companies at a fair market price and then managing them more efficiently. Money is to be made buying companies cheaply. Carlucci has enabled Carlyle to buy cheaply into the defense industry. Baker may be more broadly useful. As Rubenstein says, "Baker and Carlucci both have the ability to call any CEO in America. But Baker just puts us in a different league." Baker (like Darman) is new to the business, however, and so is not fully developed as an example of how little success in this line of work has to do with ordinary business principles.

Frank Carlucci, on the other hand, may be the closest thing there is to a pure study of the market value of political contacts. He has spent all but two years of his career as a government bureaucrat. He has held jobs in every administration from Kennedy to Bush and rose, without leaving many footprints (except for his insistence that after a press leak everyone take a lie-detector test), through the State Department, OMB, HEW, the CIA and DOD. His first big career break reads like a literary invention. Riding with fellow foreign service officers through the Congo in 1960, his car hit and killed a cyclist. A mob formed around the car and, in the ensuing melee, Carlucci was nicked in the back with a knife. He was decorated by his government for heroism. His service in the Congo brought him to the attention of Prime Minister Cyrille Adoula, who, surveying the photographs of Cabinet officers in the White House state dining room in early 1963, asked President Kennedy, "Ouést Carlucci?"

Carlucci's rise in government was unimpeded by his tendency to botch things up the few times he was thrust into anything remotely resembling a business problem. Presiding over the federal flood relief program that followed Hurricane Agnes in 1972, for example, he became the subject of a scathing series of articles in *The Washington Post* by Jack Anderson, who described in hilarious detail "the bureaucratic havoc wrought by Frank Carlucci, a human windstorm out of Washington." Before he became vice chairman of The Carlyle Group, he had held two jobs in the free market. After graduating from Princeton (he and Baker were both in the class of '52), he spent a few months as a trainee with the Jantzen swimsuit company—years ago he told reporters he had quit because he didn't like business. And before he accepted his final Defense Department posting, he spent two years, from 1983 until 1985, as president and chief executive officer of a subsidiary of Sears called Sears World Trade.

Sears World Trade was the giant retailer's attempt to compete with Japanese trading companies in shuttling goods around the world. "His job was to ride hard on 180 people and prevent them from overrunning their budget," says Rod Hills, who oversaw Carlucci's work at Sears. "He couldn't do it." "I think they're klutzes," an

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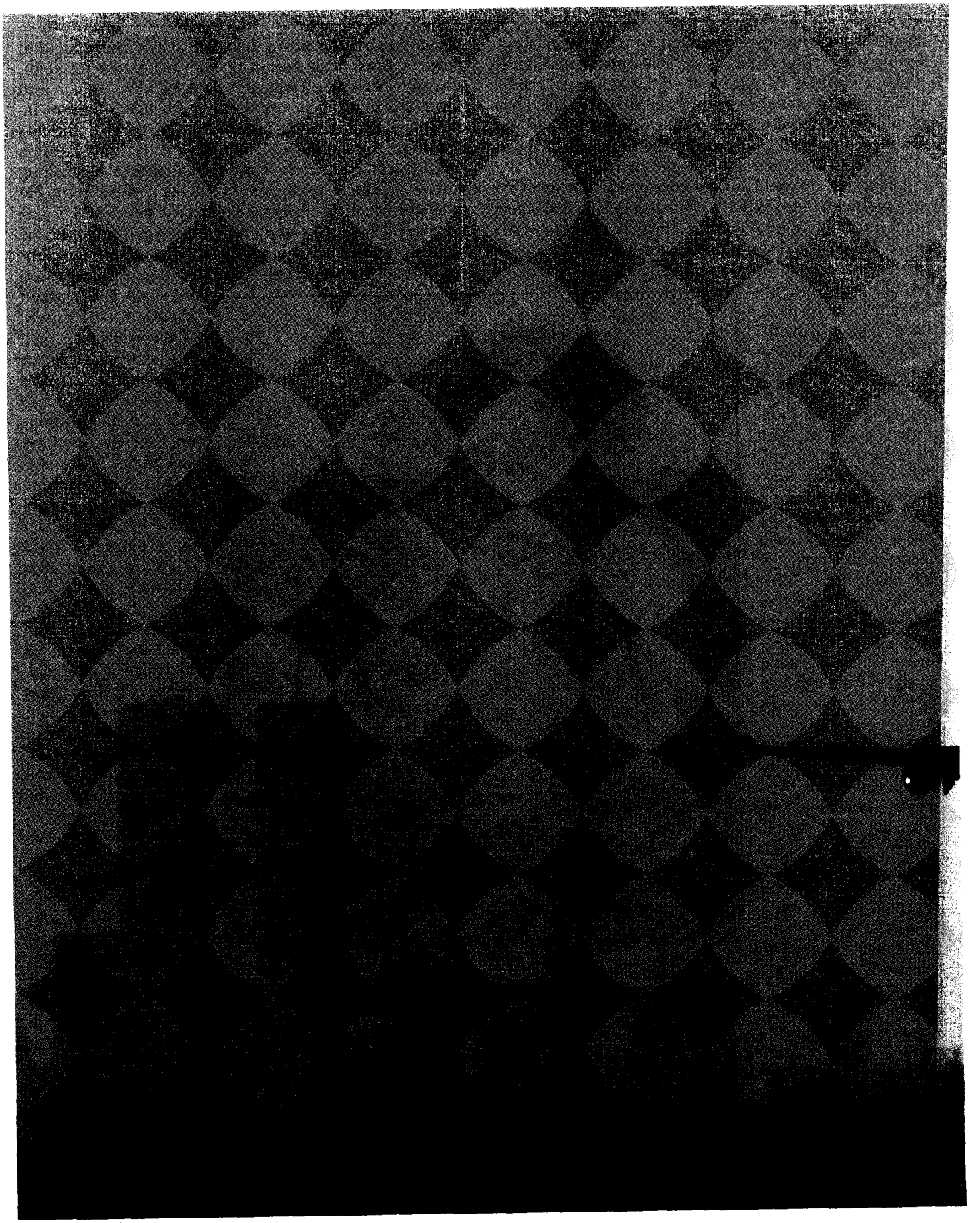

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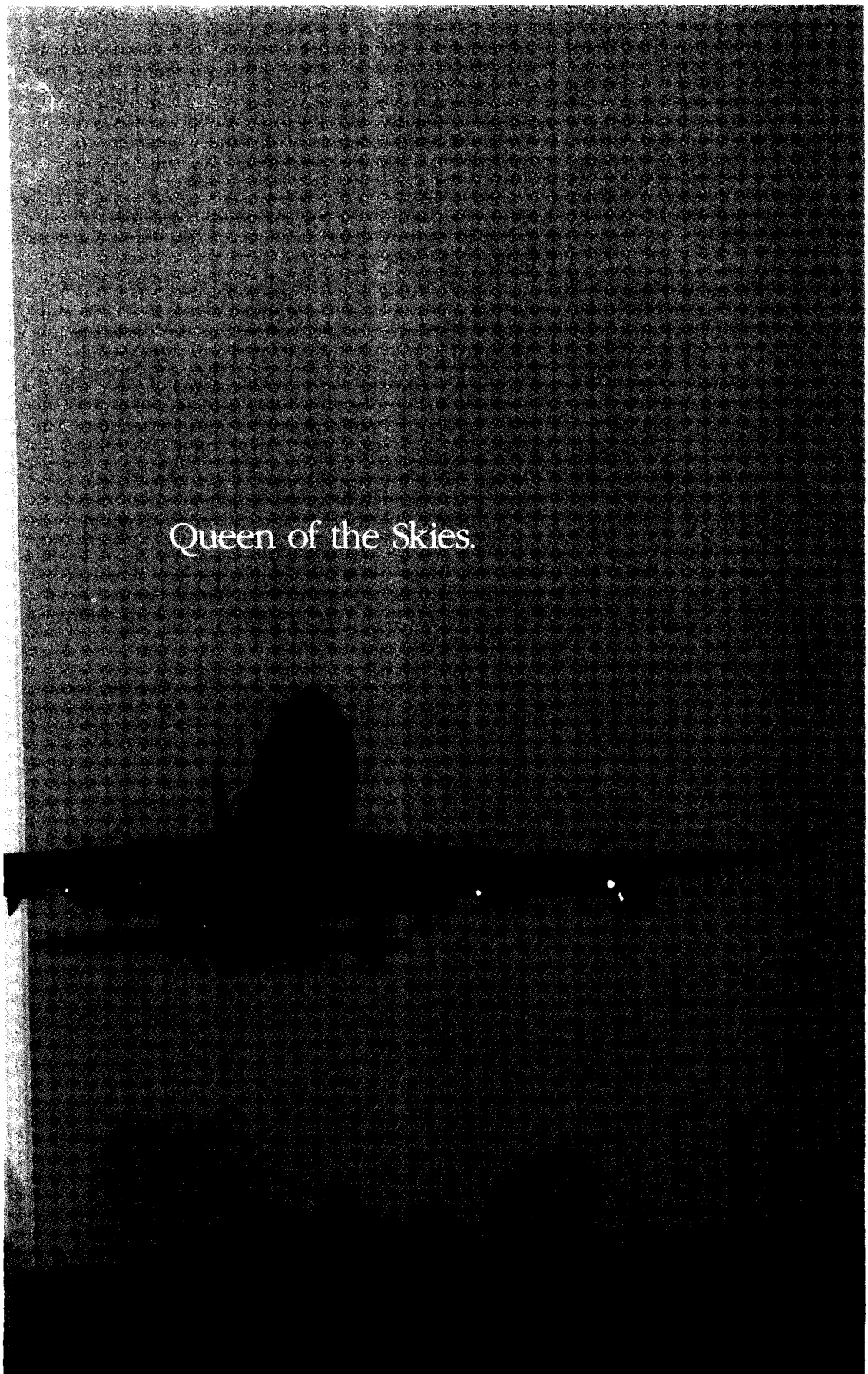

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unnamed analyst at E. F. Hutton told *The New York Times* at the time, in a colorful but typical assessment of the venture. By the time Sears World Trade closed, it had dropped a cool $60 million. Carlucci now says that Sears World Trade was "a good experience" but that "it was hard to have an entrepreneurial company in a big bureaucracy." A Sears employee who watched his work closely now says that "Frank's a nice guy, but he's got to be the worst businessman I've ever met."

Yet by some miracle of corporate politics Carlucci has remade himself into the darling of the American CEO class. He sits on the boards of thirty-two companies. A typical day in Carlucci's life—described by Kathleen Day of *The Washington Post*—consists of racing back and forth to the board meetings he's meant to attend at the rate of one per day. Meetings in a doctor's office by speakerphone! Conference calls from National Airport! Frequent flier miles! (He says he doesn't have time to use them.) So much for so little. "People think you make a lot of money out of boards," he says. "You don't, you know." That remark reveals as much as anything how thoroughly Carlucci's standards have changed since he left public office. From just nine of his board memberships he receives annual fees of $342,000 plus perks and pension benefits.

I spent an hour with Carlucci at his Carlyle office, which put me in mind, probably unfairly, of one of those special stage sets they used to design to make Alan Ladd seem tall. A toy cannon given to him by the officers and soldiers of the 109th Artillery guards the door; a miniature oriental rug lies on the floor; a tiny statue of Columbus gesticulates on the sideboard. Between the statue and the three letters of gratitude from Ronald Reagan, there rests a framed *National Journal* cover of the diminutive Carlucci leaning back in an armchair, hands clasped behind his head in the classic pose of corporate porn. Beneath him are the words: "In Control"—the one thing he most clearly is not. Carlucci's success, like that of other professional board members, depends entirely on going along with the people who actually are in control. Of his ridiculous number of board memberships he gives this revealing account: "All these things just happened. For example, Bill Anders from General Dynamics came in. He sat right there and said, 'Frank, I need your help because here's the game plan and I need support on the board for it.' Same thing with Upjohn...." In any case, Carlucci hardly has time to be in control. Apart from his board memberships and his commitment to Carlyle, he has opened his own investment bank in Bulgaria, and who knows what else. "I'm part of a group that advises Korea secretly," he said, blowing the secret. "I mean we meet behind closed doors with prominent Koreans."

Of course, the reason Carlucci—and now Baker—can work on so many fronts at once is that he doesn't do much more than make a few phone calls for each deal. One imagines Carlucci saying to a potential seller or lender the sort of things he said to me: "Les Aspin and Bill Perry have called me several times to ask my advice about the defense budget." (Perry, the deputy secretary of defense, oversees procurement. He is now deciding, for example, how much to spend on C-17 transport planes, built partly by Vought Corporation, a Carlyle Group company.) Carlucci's advice to the Defense Department is reassuring for owners of defense-related businesses. "I think the cuts in defense spending—I know they're too deep," he says. "You are going to destroy the coherence of the military if you implement these cuts."

It's a bit of a mystery what access capitalists say or do during those precious seconds when they are fully employed, since no one involved in the deals has any incentive to expose himself. This gives Rubenstein the confidence to claim that, no matter how long I looked, I would find no case in which Carlucci, Baker and the others used their political connections on behalf of The Carlyle Group. "It's not fair to say that we're lobbying the government," he said. "That's not what we do." He's right—the use of influence is usually much more subtle. Still, I didn't have to look far to disprove his claim. One piece of Carlyle's business fell briefly into the public domain. And it nicely illustrates the manner in which political people who turn their hands to finance are able to blend their former public roles with their private interests.

In the early part of last year The Carlyle Group, in partnership with Thomson CSF, the French government-owned electronics company, purchased the missile manufacturing and aerospace divisions out of the bankruptcy proceedings of the LTV Corporation. LTV's prized missile technology was what the Pentagon calls a "black box program," which means no one from outside is meant to know what's inside. Because the French are notorious both for the theft of industrial secrets and for the sale of advanced weapons to all takers, the purchase was challenged in Congress on national security grounds. That Carlyle was paying an extremely low price for its half of the deal, while Thomson was paying through the nose for the missiles, heightened suspicion that the French buyers, despite their promises not to peer into the black boxes at LTV, were, in effect, buying American military secrets.

Hearings into the deal were to be held by the Senate Commerce Committee. According to one committee staffer, the first sign of Carlyle's clout came when Senator Ernest Hollings, the committee's chairman, "received an ominous sounding phone call from someone who said, 'I want you to know that Arthur Levitt owns *Roll Call*.'" (*Roll Call* is an influential Capitol Hill publication and Levitt, now SEC chairman, is a Carlyle investor.) During the hearings similar messages were delivered to staffers, though never by a Carlyle employee. "They were very subtle," says the staffer.

Carlyle appointed Frank Carlucci to testify on behalf of the partnership, a move that was a bit strange because, of the several Carlyle partners involved, he knew the least about the deal. In response, the Com-

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merce Committee decided it required someone of equal stature—perhaps another former defense secretary—who might be more objective. "At first we thought it wasn't going to be a problem, but then we couldn't find anyone to testify," says a person involved in the process. "But it was [a problem]. I had the sense that Carlyle had spoken to all of our sources."

In addition to the interested parties, the committee heard the testimony of two independent expert witnesses: Frank Gaffney, a former defense department official, and Alton Keel, a former ambassador to NATO. Gaffney came down strongly against the deal, and was scathing about Carlucci's role. ("The one thing that people like Frank Carlucci know how to do is to work the system," he says now.) Keel came down strongly in favor of it. "Al's testimony was so striking," says Gaffney, "that afterward I asked him if he had any interest in the transaction. He said he did not." Following a hunch, a participant in the hearings telephoned The Carlyle Group and was immediately put through to the firm's newest associate—Alton Keel. The hearings occurred on May 14. According to one Carlyle partner, Keel had joined Carlyle in February. Yet during the hearings Keel kept this seemingly relevant data to himself.

But it was Carlucci's manner, in both the Senate and the House hearings, that revealed the most about the mindset of the political bigwig turned business tycoon. He was at once a businessman representing his own interests, and those of the French, and a kind of ex officio public official. "I've been working with this subcommittee since 1977," he explained in his House testimony before a subcommittee of the Armed Services Committee, "when I first became deputy director of the CIA. I think the members of this subcommittee are well aware of my commitment to U.S. national security.... I am absolutely convinced that this [deal] will add to the capability of our defense industrial base." During the hearing, after a Congressman claimed he had seen a secret Defense Department study recommending the rejection of the sale, Carlucci left the room, called his friend Donald Atwood, the undersecretary of defense, returned to the room and reported that his friend did not oppose the acquisition.

Although Carlucci recalls having been grilled mercilessly on both sides of the Hill, he was for the most part treated with deference. There was one exception.

HOLLINGS: I could not possibly see, and I am sure Mr. Carlucci cannot see, General Schwartzkopf being employed by Saddam Hussein to train his troops. Why should we allow you to come in now, as a former secretary of defense, and take over our defense technology for France?
CARLUCCI: Senator, I resent that question.
HOLLINGS: I do not resent it. That is a very serious question.
CARLUCCI: I devoted a lifetime of service to my country.
HOLLINGS: Yes, sir.
CARLUCCI: I rose up through the civil service ranks. I have seen a bayonet jammed in the face of my daughter in service to my country. I have been arrested. I have been stabbed. I have been brought in to clean up the mess after Iran-contra. I would not do anything to undermine the security of this country.

Propped up on a coffee table in Carlucci's office is a framed letter from George Bush. It says how sorry the president was to hear that Congress had stymied Thomson's purchase of LTV's missile systems (which it did), but how happy he was to hear that Carlyle had found an American partner for its deal (which it did). The letter is another one of those inside jokes—like The Great Eskimo Tax Scam—that the outsider doesn't get. "No one but Carlyle could have gotten this thing as far along as it went," says Gaffney.

My second session with Rubenstein began much like the first, except that he kept himself on the record. In the three weeks between our two encounters he and other Carlyle employees had placed a sensational number of defensive phone calls to my friends, colleagues and potential sources. "The last time we met," he began, "I told you that you could go one of two ways with your story ... so which is it?"

But before I could answer, he was off and running: "I'm concerned that the tone of the article will be that what I've done is illegal, unethical and immoral. I just think it's unfair. I've been very careful to make sure that Baker isn't out raising money in the Middle East.... I've leaned over backward so far to avoid using government contacts. I didn't want anyone to be able to write an article saying we were trading on our connections."

I have no doubt that Rubenstein's concern for appearances is sincere. The access game is growing more complicated as the seriously well-connected juke and jive to adapt to the nation's moral climate. The distinctions they make grow finer all the time. Of course, the point of all these distinctions is that they don't require any truly well-connected person to forego his one shot at the main chance. Rubenstein may not have asked Baker to pass the hat in the Middle East, but *he* is passing the hat in the Middle East, and implicit in that pitch is that James Baker works for him.

Perhaps the best indication of the nature of The Carlyle Group's business is that each week it receives hundreds of résumés from Washingtonians as free of financial sense, and as frustrated with conventional influence peddling, as its founders once were. "I get résumés from some of the biggest names in town," says Rubenstein, "lawyers who are making $800,000 a year. They call and say they'll come and work for free. It's almost embarrassing."

Finally, I was able to ask Rubenstein a question. I asked if it was true, as I'd heard, that he told people he wouldn't consider returning to public service until he had made $50 million. "I don't think I said that," he said. "What I said was that someone in the Bass family said that when you make $50 million you have a different perspective on life."

As the doors were closing behind me at The Carlyle Group, he asked me his final question: "How do I keep it from being a cover story?" •

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Class Consciousness

The basic trouble with Martin Scorsese's **The Age of Innocence** (Columbia) is Edith Wharton's novel. Looking back fifty years in 1920, Wharton conceived a tale of love versus honor set in New York high society of that past era, and she embodied it in a full-dress novel. But her material would have served only as a short story, at most a novella, for Tolstoy or Chekhov. What helps to sustain Wharton's more extended treatment is the attractive prose in which she wraps her narrative. Her writing has so much wit and perception, such a taking blend of satire-cum-nostalgia, that the book holds us though the story is slender. (I still feel the ending shortchanges us. I want to know what Ellen Olenska said to Newland Archer's son in her Paris apartment, what the youth thought when she ordered the shutters closed against his father, how he later reported the meeting to his father.) In the film, without its garment of text, the denuded story is thin.

It's worse than that—because the film tries to be the novel. Attempting to reproduce the text's quality, very nearly page for page, Scorsese even uses considerable prose excerpts on the soundtrack (read flatly by Joanne Woodward). He and his co-adapter, Jay Cocks, have been zealously faithful to the original, but, ironically, all that this fidelity does is make the picture seem slow. Film can't cloak, can't justify, as Wharton's prose does, the linearity of the story.

It's even worse—because (to close the novel's trap) Scorsese and Cocks had no choice: the picture has to run as long as it does. The adapters understood that there was absolutely no point in the enterprise if the decorum of drawing room and dining room, the rustle of silk and the spruceness of boutonnieres were slighted. Etiquette, at its most stately, is the theater of this drama. Among some critics, there was advance worry about this; could Scorsese, the director from Little Italy, cope with the Four Hundred? That worry always seemed unnecessary to me. A director of his gifts, flanked with brigades of various period experts, aided mightily by the camera of Michael Ballhaus, would delight in the nooks and crannies of the period—and he does. But it's a bitter triumph. He *had* to include all the glitter and elegance; yet it doesn't sustain the story as Wharton's writing does.

Not for lack of cinematic imagination. Scorsese is one of the two or three best American directors now at work, and his talent is quickly evident in the way the camera searches out every wisp of possible action in a scene, the way that characters move up to and past the camera to suggest that the theater we are sitting in is part of the room on screen, the way the camera often nestles in to people as if to hear secrets. In a moment that might have been static for another director, when Newland Archer gets an important telegram from his fiancée May Welland, Scorsese has May speak it in front of an immense bank of flowers as the camera comes close, charging the moment with perfume and intimacy.

When twenty-six years elapse, after Ellen takes herself out of Newland Archer's life and returns to Europe, a time-lapse that Wharton can handle with a simple chapter break, Scorsese shuns the banality of fade-out on the young Archer and fade-in on the middle-aged man. He concentrates on Archer's library "in which most of the real things of his life had happened." He circles the room slowly, showing us moments in the Archer family chronicle during those years.

And music! The most Scorsesean touch in Wharton's book is that it begins at the opera. (Remember Mascagni under the opening of *Raging Bull.*) Red meat to Scorsese, as it was to Visconti in *Senso.* Onward from this opening, Scorsese uses lively music to spank sequences into life—often, at balls and parties, with music that comes from within the scene or else with Elmer Bernstein's felicitous score.

But—a heavy but—Scorsese has made serious mistakes with his principal actors. The biggest disappointment is in the crucial part, Daniel Day-Lewis as Newland Archer. Archer is the protagonist, happily affianced to May Welland, who then falls in love with the newly arrived Ellen Olenska. The central drama is his. (Ellen's agon is no less, but she isn't placed at the center.) On the basis of Day-Lewis's past work, forceful and graphic in *A Room With a View, My Beautiful Laundrette* and *My Left Foot,* he seemed very likely to inhabit the role, to vitalize it. He doesn't. He merely moves through it. There's never a spark to sting us: he leaves us cold, observant.

Perhaps Scorsese was counting on his

FILMS WORTH SEEING

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personality to grip us, a resident power such as Fredric March or James Mason had. Day-Lewis doesn't have it. He needed to act (which Mason or March would have done, too!), but he doesn't. He skates through. It's surprising that Scorsese didn't remedy this.

Michelle Pfeiffer is a somewhat more complicated case. As Ellen Olenska, the American who returns to New York after a broken European marriage, Pfeiffer tries hard but fails. It's sad. She is living as intelligent a life as is possible for an American film star these days: seeking variety, taking chances, addressing every role with all the resources she can command. She just doesn't command enough—in fire or depth or resonance. The result in film after film is a somewhat washed-out version of the woman she is playing, like a painting that has faded. Her Ellen is perceptible but pallid. What helps Pfeiffer most is the fact that though she is exceptionally pretty, she patently doesn't rely on her prettiness: she wants to act. But, with her Ellen, though we know what she means from moment to moment, we simply don't feel it.

Winona Ryder is disastrously miscast as May Welland, Archer's utterly conventional fiancée and eventual wife who turns out to have been more perceptive than her husband knew. Ryder is wrong, first, physically. Wharton describes May as being "tall, round-bosomed and willowy" with a "goddesslike-build," and comments frequently on her features. Clearly Wharton means May's physical being to help explain why Archer wanted her. Here Archer has chosen a moderately pleasant, quite unremarkable girl. As for Ryder's acting, the one smile for me in this film—which is and must be socially hyperconscious—was when Ryder remarks to Archer that a man she has just met seems common. To put it gently, her social superiority is unconvincing.

Robert Sean Leonard, who trivialized Claudio in the recent *Much Ado About Nothing*, has less chance here to do damage in the small role of Archer's son. But most of the supporting actors in the lustrous New York social parade are neatly cast, and two of them do the best acting in the film. Alec McCowen, as Sillerton Jackson, the aging socialite, has the gravity of a man to whom protocol is his reason for being. Miriam Margolyes, as the obese and ultra-rich Mrs. Mingott, curls the surrounding air with dry disdain and hierarchical rigor.

The Age of Innocence was dramatized on Broadway in 1928 and was filmed in Hollywood in 1924 and 1934. I don't know any of those versions, and I wonder how (which means I doubt that) they avoided the snare that Wharton unwittingly set for her adapters, the snare that, for all his gifts, caught Scorsese. •

Obsession

BY RICHARD A. POSNER

Only Words
by Catharine A. MacKinnon

(Harvard University Press, 152 pp., $14.95)

The title of Catharine A. MacKinnon's new book is intended as an ironic commentary on the belief that pornography is "only words" and therefore, unlike sticks and stones, can never hurt anyone. There is a further irony that is unintended: *Only Words* is a rhetorical, rather than an analytical, production; it is only words. It is eloquent and forceful but it lacks, perhaps because of its brevity, the careful distinctions, scrupulous weighing of evidence and fair consideration of opposing views that one is entitled to expect in a work written by a professor at an eminent law school (Michigan) and published by a distinguished university press (Harvard).

The book is a verbal torrent that appeals, much like pornography itself as MacKinnon conceives it, to elemental passions (fear, disgust, anger, hatred) rather than to the rational intellect. There is no nuance, qualification, measure or sense of proportion. "You grow up with your father holding you down and covering your mouth so another man can make horrible searing pain between your legs. When you are older, your husband ties you to the bed and drips hot wax on your nipples and brings in other men to watch and makes you smile through it." "The message of [pornography] ... is 'get her' ... This message is addressed directly to the penis, delivered through an erection

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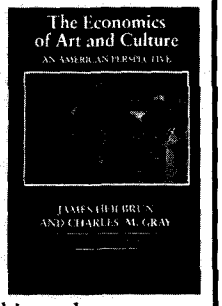

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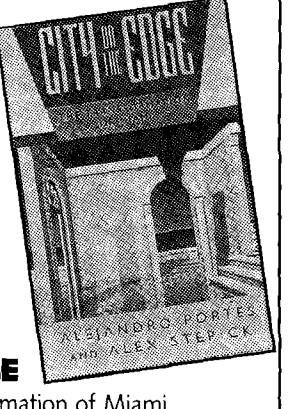

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and taken out on women in the real world." "Society is made of language," and "speech ... belongs to those who own it, mainly big corporations," which are complicit in the production of pornography because they are managed by men and have a financial stake in being free to publish anything that is profitable. "Pornography makes the world a pornographic place." We live in "a world made by pornography." "'Pornography [MacKinnon is quoting with approval her frequent collaborator Andrea Dworkin] is the law for women.'" And so on.

Beneath the anger, the hyperbole, the sarcasm, the rhetorical questions, the indignation and the innuendoes—MacKinnon says that "some [consumers of pornography] undoubtedly write judicial opinions" and suggests that the Supreme Court might not have held child pornography illegal if the children in the case before the Court had been girls rather than boys—the outline of an argument can be discerned. It is that pornography destroys the lives of the women who appear in it and causes the men who consume it to commit rapes and sexual murders, abuse female children sexually and generally discriminate against, disvalue and intimidate women. "Sooner or later, in one way or another, the consumers want to live out the pornography further in three dimensions," want "to keep the world a pornographic place so they can continue to get hard from everyday life."

Since pornography "impels behaviors in ways that are unique in their extent and devastating in their consequences," why do the courts permit it? Partly because most judges are men, partly because, in laudable reaction to the excesses of the McCarthy era, they made a dogma of the First Amendment's free speech and free press clauses. This dogma has blinded these male judges to the fact that "women are far more likely to be harmed through pornography than the U.S. government is to be overthrown by Communists." Judges do not realize, moreover, that there is no tenable distinction between words and deeds. "*Saying* 'kill' to a trained attack dog is only words." They have never been able to explain "why, if pornography is protected speech based on its mental elements, rape and sexual murder, which have mental elements, are not [protected speech] as well."

The incoherence of the judicial approach is further shown, in MacKinnon's view, by the fact that laws against sexual harassment in the workplace have been upheld even though much of that harassment is verbal: Why should women be protected *only* in the workplace? Above all, the courts have failed to recognize the tension between equality, which is protected by the Fourteenth Amendment, and freedom of expression, which is protected by the First Amendment. When free expression is used to demean or intimidate a vulnerable group—as in the case of racial epithets and other "hate speech," including the teaching that the Holocaust never happened—restricting that expression may be necessary to the achievement of full equality, and it should therefore be allowed. We should not regret that, if this argument is accepted, members of minority groups will have greater freedom of speech than white males. "The more the speech of the dominant is protected, the more dominant they become." We should not succumb to "the studied inability to tell the difference between oppressor and oppressed that passes for principled neutrality."

To evaluate MacKinnon's argument, it is first necessary to consider what exactly she means by "pornography." In ordinary language the word denotes a sexually graphic representation, verbal or pictorial, heterosexual or homosexual, designed to titillate or to arouse the reader or the viewer. What it means to MacKinnon is not entirely clear, but it seems implicitly confined to two categories of expression: live erotic performances (such as striptease dancing) and, more important, photographs of women nude or engaged in a sexual act, real or simulated. She says that "all pornography is made under conditions of inequality based on sex," and this seems to exclude a purely verbal or cartoon presentation where no woman is involved in the production of the work as model or actress. To count as pornography, the representation must depict women as "subordinated" to men in some fashion, but this requirement would appear to be satisfied by virtually any nude photograph of a woman, since MacKinnon calls *Playboy* pornographic. She is understandably most concerned about violent pornography, especially when it involves actual violence rather than simulated violence perpetrated upon the pornographic models or actresses. Yet her implicit definition, confusingly different from the Dworkin-MacKinnon antipornography ordinance that Indianapolis adopted and the courts struck down, sweeps far more broadly.

It is odd that MacKinnon should leave her definition of pornography implicit. It is odd, too, that she should let her book create the impression that all pornography, as she defines it, except that in which child models are used, is

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THE VIEW FROM THE EDGE

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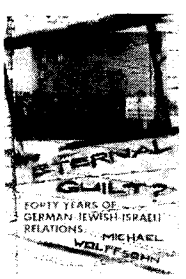

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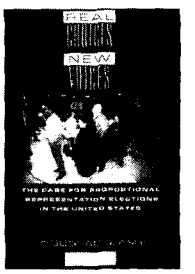

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Mahatma Gandhi

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legal in the United States. Most "hard-core" pornography—approximately, the photographic depiction of actual sex acts or of an erect penis—is illegal. MacKinnon could complain, but does not, that the existing laws are not enforced with sufficient energy. Since men control the legal system (she believes) and have (she further believes) an immense stake in pornography, she seems unable to conceive that there might actually be laws on the books, even underenforced laws, against the stuff.

But what is true is that her conception of pornography reaches far beyond current law, and would forbid a good deal of material that is considered to be privileged by the First Amendment. How much farther is unclear, but it may be very far indeed. *Playboy*'s stock in trade is retouched nude photographs of smiling, voluptuous young women in suggestive poses. If these photographs, only moderately erotic by contemporary standards, are pornography, as MacKinnon appears to believe, much of the production of the American film and theater industry, a fair amount of cable television, a huge number of videocassettes, some greeting cards, some advertising and even an occasional opera are pornographic as well.

That is rather a lot to remove from the market. It would require, as MacKinnon fails to mention, not a smattering of Indianapolis-style local ordinances, but a law enforcement effort on the scale of Prohibition or the "war on drugs," and with the same dubious prospects of success. Would it be worth it? In MacKinnon's distinctive idiom, "How many women's bodies have to stack up here even to register against male profit and pleasure presented as First Amendment principle?" In more neutral language, what is the harm of "soft core" pornography, à la *Playboy*, that would justify an Iran-style crusade against the photographic display of the female body?

On this critical question, the book is largely a blank. A footnote cites several studies that have found that pornography can incite aggressive behavior by men; and this is supplemented by some anecdotal evidence. (MacKinnon mentions a sexual murder committed in a manner that had been depicted in a magazine published eight months earlier, though there is no evidence that the murderer had seen the magazine.) MacKinnon also tries to get some mileage from the decision invalidating the Indianapolis ordinance by noting that the decision accepted the ordinance's premise that pornography harms women. In fact the premise was accepted only for the sake of argument; the court held that the ordinance would be unconstitutional even if the premise were true.

MacKinnon's treatment of the central issue of pornography as she herself poses it—the harm that pornography does to women—is shockingly casual. Much of her evidence is anecdotal, and in a nation of 260 million people, anecdotes are a weak form of evidence. She does not acknowledge the limited scope of the scientific evidence that she does cite; this evidence, which concerns the attitudinal and behavioral effects of pornography, is largely limited to the violent kind, but she wants to forbid the nonviolent kind as well. She also does not consider the counterevidence, which is extensive. It includes such facts as that Denmark, which has no law against even hard-core pornography, and Japan, in which pornography is sold freely and is dominated by rape and bondage scenes, have rates of rape far lower than the United States; that the rate of rape in the United States has been falling even as the amount of hard-core pornography has undoubtedly increased because of the videocassette; and that women's status tends to be lower in societies that repress pornography (such as those of the Islamic nations) than in societies that do not (such as those of the Scandinavian nations). And some of MacKinnon's conservative allies in the fight against pornography believe that pornography deflects men from intercourse to masturbation (in MacKinnon's own words, "pornography is masturbation material") rather than spurring them to rape. Pornography may be a substitute for intercourse (including rape) rather than a complement to it.

It would be a mistake to conclude that pornography has been shown to be harmless. The evidence is inconclusive. My point is that our present knowledge does not warrant a confident conclusion that eliminating or, more realistically, reducing the quantity of pornography would either reduce or increase the incidence of sex crimes and other mistreatments of women. It is especially reckless to conclude, as MacKinnon does, without a careful discussion of the state of the evidence, that pornography in the United States today is a major cause of harm to women. The issue of magnitude is critical; it would not pay to devote substantial social resources to extirpating a minor source of harm.

It is not on behalf of consumers of pornography (not all of them heterosexual males) who will be deprived of a source of possibly harmless pleasure that I raise this question. My concern is that she is proposing an enormously ambitious and possibly quixotic program of law enforcement in order to bring about what for all anyone knows might be only a small improvement, and perhaps no improvement at all, in the life of American women. Not even to discuss this question is the cardinal weakness of the book.

MacKinnon's blindness to the fact that hard-core pornography is already illegal in this country largely vitiates her emphasis on the brutal treatment of pornographic models and actresses. For that is exactly the sort of treatment that one expects in an illegal market. When an economic activity is placed outside the protection of the law—as we know from Prohibition, prostitution, the campaign against drugs and the employment of illegal immigrants—the participants in that activity will resort to threats and violence in lieu of the contractual and other legal remedies denied them. The pimp is an artifact of the illegality of prostitution, and the exploitation of pornographic actresses and models by their employers is parallel to the exploitation of illegal immigrant labor by their employers. These women would be better off if all pornography were legal.

MacKinnon misses another critical distinction when she complains about the asymmetrical treatment of pornography on the one hand, and the verbal sexual harassment of women in the workplace on the other. If words are actionable harm in the latter context, why then, she asks, not in the former context, too? An obvious answer is overlooked. In the case of harassment, the words are aimed at a woman; she is the target of a verbal assault. In the case of pornography, the words (pictures are MacKinnon's actual concern) are aimed at a man, the reader or the viewer of the pornography, and the aim is to please, not to insult or to intimidate. Since a woman is not the intended (and rarely the actual) viewer or reader, she can be harmed only if the voluntary male consumer of the pornography is incited by it to mistreat a woman. The effect is indirect, and whether it is substantial is the essential issue that MacKinnon fails to confront. She is also too facile in equating child pornography with adult pornography on the grounds that the objection to child pornography is the inequality between children and adults, and that adult pornography reflects a similar inequality between women and men.

MacKinnon wants to associate women with other traditional victim groups,

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specifically blacks and Jews. She compares pornography to the shouting of racial epithets and to Nazi marches and Holocaust revisionism, all of which are expressive sources of pain. But these comparisons, especially the last one, cause her to equivocate over the difference between the form of expression and its content. Most of the time she treats pornography as something that bypasses the rational intellect (the "message is addressed directly to the penis"), and misogynistic messages not conveyed by sexually explicit representations then fall outside its scope; "pornography [is] more than mere words, while the words of communism *are* only words." Mere words are privileged. But then she applauds Canada for punishing the propagation of claims that the Holocaust did not occur, even though these claims, like "the words of communism, *are* only words."

In the same vein MacKinnon observes that "the current legal distinction between screaming 'go kill that nigger' and advocating the view that African-Americans should be eliminated from parts of the United States needs to be seriously reconsidered." But if the line between incitement and advocacy, and between obscenity and misogyny, is erased, then censorship will become a pervasive feature of American public life. And the Communist case will then be an easy one, communism having done more harm to more people than pornography, and so I cannot understand why MacKinnon regards the protection of the free speech of Communists as one of the shining moments of American constitutionalism.

She approves of the decision in *New York Times* v. *Sullivan*, which limited the right of public figures to sue for defamation, because the public figures involved were white racists; if they had been black, they should have been allowed to sue. She is derisive about the refusal of the courts to distinguish between oppressor and oppressed, and to grant more rights to the latter. And yet it is not always clear which is which. Some people believe that criminals, who in this country are disproportionately black, and who are, of course, the perpetrators of rape and other sex crimes, are an oppressed group. German judges before 1945 thought that Germans were an oppressed group and that Jews were their oppressors; and Stalin exterminated so-called oppressors by the tens of millions. In the United States today, Jews are being harmed by affirmative action for blacks and other favored minorities in higher education; concerns are voiced about the return of the *numerus*

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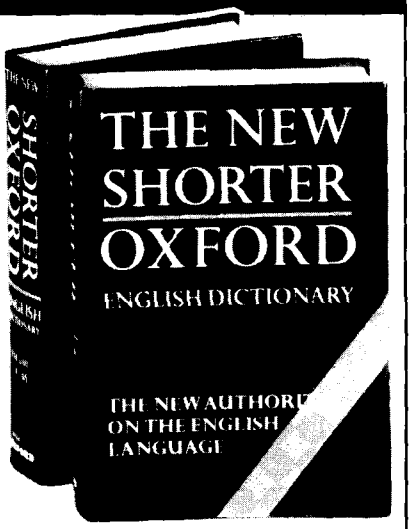

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clausus and its effect on American Jews' sense of security. Would it really be a good thing for judges to pick their favorite groups, pronounce them oppressed and award them extra rights? Would it help women?

And just how oppressed are women in the United States in 1993? Can MacKinnon be oblivious to the changes in the status of women that have occurred in recent years, changes to which she has contributed through her tireless advocacy? Is she stuck in a time warp? Is pornography really what is holding women back? Can it be pornography that is responsible, as she suggests, for "femininity"? If censorship is the answer to women's problems, shouldn't we censor the forms of femininity-encouraging expression that women actually watch, such as television commercials in which housewives wax kitchen floors happily, or Doris Day movies?

The enormous increase in the number of working women has focused public attention on employment conditions, such as sexual harassment and the lack of generous provisions for child care and maternity leave, that disfavor female employees. That increase, both a cause and an effect of women's increasing emancipation from traditional household duties, has also increased women's demands for sexual freedom and reproductive autonomy, hence for secure protection against rape and for the right of abortion. Less dependent on men, better educated, better paid, more conscious of alternatives to marriage, women have become politically more assertive, more powerful. And so politicians cater to them; and some women are themselves influential politicians. The result has been a flood of laws, including rape-shield laws, laws criminalizing marital rape, laws forbidding sexual harassment and discrimination, all designed to help women who want sexual freedom, reproductive autonomy and successful careers.

There is still oppression of individual women in America. (Although MacKinnon's estimate that 38 percent of American women were sexually abused as children is probably a twofold exaggeration, the lower figure is still a shocker.) MacKinnon's conception of American women as eternal victims, cowed, fearful, intimidated and silenced—by pornography, yet—may once have been true, though I greatly doubt it; but today it is certainly false and patronizing. I do not know what has caused MacKinnon to become, and, more surprisingly, to remain, so obsessed with pornography, and so zealous for censorship. But let us not sacrifice our civil liberties on the altar of her obsession.

RICHARD A. POSNER, a judge on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit and a senior lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School, is the author of *Sex and Reason* (Harvard University Press).

Of Human Bondage

BY EUGEN WEBER

Sade: A Biography by Maurice Lever translated by Arthur Goldhammer

(Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 626 pp., $35)

The house of Sade descends from one of the three magi, probably Balthasar; and maybe also from the shepherd boy who, in 1177, at the behest of Jesus and with an angel's help, began to build the bridge at Avignon. Spectral apparitions aside, the provost of Avignon who helped finance the building of the bridge was a Louis de Sade. Sades have lived in Provence for a long time, trading, marrying, fighting, loving and lording it around. A long roll of prelates, captains, papal chamberlains, magistrates, diplomats and *abbésses* fed the feudal pride that Maurice Lever's hero cherished all his life; there is even a fair chance that Petrarch's Laura, symbol of chastity and spiritual perfection, was among them. She visited her descendant in his sleep in one of his many prisons, and it would seem for once that no funny business passed between them.

The hero's father, Jean-Baptiste, was allied by marriage to the great family of Condé, princes of royal blood. As one of the most illustrious libertines of Louis XV's day, he squandered the family fortune. From the book's beginning, the lists of ladies' lovers and men's mistresses read like pages out of the social register. But the monotony of straightforward sex was broken by the count's hunting for young boys, and by the run-ins with the law that such pursuits could bring. Nothing dire happened. "The philosophical sin" was an aristocratic caprice, like frequenting philosophers such as Voltaire or joining the masonic lodge to which Count de Sade was initiated in 1730, at the same time as Montesquieu. His brilliant life of pleasure, shows, boys, women and a bit of diplomacy on the side only went awry when the nonchalant rake said something to offend a royal mistress and found himself out of royal favor. He remained in the doghouse for the rest of his life, consoled, as often happens in such cases, by piety, prayer and more solid creature comforts.

Jean-Baptiste's only son Donatien was born in 1740, and brought up first in the Condé household along with princes of the blood. Donatien acquired their haughty demeanor, reflecting the belief that he was above others and entitled to use them as he pleased. He seems to have been an unbearable child, imperious in desires and violent in his rages; but relations between father and son were affectionate. The mother, meanwhile, appears a distant presence. "I love my father and hate my mother," declares one of Sade's characters; and that inverted Oedipus complex extended to maternity, which Sade covered with sarcasm, and to maternal values—compassion, tenderness, fidelity, sacrifice—which he dismissed as rooted in self-interest and fear.

In 1744, Donatien received the homage of his father's vassals, eminent grown-ups bowing before a 4-year-old child. He also discovered the family seat of Saumane, a somber fortress perched on a rocky crag seven leagues from Avignon, where he dwelt six years in the company of his erudite uncle, the *abbé* de Sade (who lived with a mother and daughter and made free with both), enjoying the run of the philosophical and pornographic library that the holy man had gathered. Equipped with deep cellars, subterranean galleries and dank cells whence no cry for help could reach the outside world, Saumane is the model sanctum in which to harbor evil and liberate crime. Its entrails would inspire a few chapters on torture and pleasure in forthcoming novels.

In 1750, the young marquis moved on to the best school that a blue blood could attend: the Jesuit *collège* of Louis-le-Grand in Paris. There he discovered his love for the theater: mise-en-scène, sexual choreography, *tableaux vivants*, ballets of postures. And the scene-shifting

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equipment of which the age was fond suggested equally labor-saving pleasure machines for whipping, raping, impregnating—and not least the orgasm-machine that Jane Fonda was to experience in *Barbarella.* Donatien also discovered the delights of flagellation and the arousal that a good whipping could bring, which, as for Rousseau, determined some of his later tastes. Heterosexual encounters yielded only incomplete satisfactions. Sade's chief pleasure, henceforth, would involve the coincidence of heterosexual sodomy with passive penetration, spiced up by some flogging. Theatricality, flagellation, sodomy, passivity: Louis-le-Grand launched him on his future. Pity that the Jesuits did not teach him cricket!

Now it was time to face the world. Face it he did, and at a rapid pace. In 1754 he left the Jesuits for the king's elite light horse, at 15 he was a lieutenant, at 16 he performed valiantly in the assault on Port-Mahon, at 18 he was a cavalry captain. The Seven Years' War was at its height. Six campaigns in Germany and a nice fat baroness in Cleves "who educated me very nicely" left him speaking German "like Cicero!" Unsurprisingly, he suffered from hemorrhoids, awkward for riding a horse (which suggests why most gentlemen preferred to use catamites rather than be used). But the war ended in 1763, and the young warrior found himself at loose ends, though not for very long.

He had fair hair, blue eyes, a pouty smile, money to gamble and a furiously combustible heart. Ever fatuous, ever infatuated, Donatien slept late, wrote poetry, acted in plays, collected mistresses, ran up debts, got into scrapes just as his father had done, only more recklessly. "I woke up every morning looking for pleasure," and went to bed at night having hocked another farm. When he married an heiress, daughter of a high magistrate, the king and half a dozen princes signed the marriage contract. Renée-Pélagie de Montreuil was physically unattractive, but the arranged marriage was about money; and anyway, as Lever remarks, Donatien was actually marrying his mother-in-law, Madame de Montreuil, with whom he had much in common. "Both knew how to seduce, intimidate, corrupt ... without regret or remorse." Both were unscrupulous and brutal; but the lady was shrewd, prudent and capable of self-control, bourgeois virtues far removed from her new relative's make-up.

With fresh money to spend, the young lord was free to shift gears from diversion to perversion. Married in May 1763, five months later the marquis was arrested for sodomy and blasphemy. He had brought a prostitute to a small house that he had acquired for his private sport, read poetry to her, masturbated into a chalice, placed hosts in the woman's vagina and entered her shouting "If thou art God, avenge yourself!" No lightning struck and the woman dodged the sodomy that was proposed, so Sade escaped serious consequences. Torrents of tears, lyrical despair, soon copied down in his Complete Manuscript Works for posterity, attested to repentance. Family influence helped. After fifteen days in the tower of Vincennes, he was set free to journey to Dijon, there to be dubbed the king's lieutenant-general of four southeastern provinces in succession to his father, and to continue a life of liaisons.

In 1767 Jean-Baptiste died and Donatien became head of the family. At Lacoste, his chief seat, today in the department of Vaucluse, two consuls and four other representatives of the townlet "did homage to the high and mighty lord Louis Aldonse Donatien, marquis de Sade, seated in an armchair, the consuls kneeling before him heads bared ... their hands joined inside those of their lord ... promised and swore to be ... good, loyal and faithful vassals..." Throughout his life, Sade kept shifting between the aristocrat steeped in heredi-

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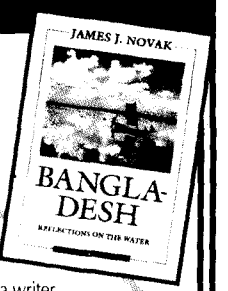

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tary privilege and the philosophe claiming quite novel rights; but he remained consistent in demanding that others live up to the ideas that they avowed, as he lived down to very different ones.

Sexual excesses ran uninterrupted, now carefully recorded by police. At Arcueil, on the outskirts of Paris, "persons of both sexes" were brought, flogged, fed and paid for "debauched commerce" until on Easter day 1768, excess became excessive; one of the victims complained to the police and Donatien was again confined. Lever thinks that he was a scapegoat in power struggles between Parliament and Crown. I think that the scapegrace never got quite what he deserved—except the pox, and that reward he shared with many others. Kidnapping, rape, torture and sodomy were covered up again; and victims were bought off or discouraged. Donatien, as his erstwhile *abbé*-tutor testified, had an ardent temperament but a good heart. He was good at repenting, and anyway pranks of this sort, when committed by members of the nobility, were treated as misdemeanors. "Every day," Lever reminds us, "great lords tortured other human beings ... for the sole gratification of their senses." Sade simply made more of a show of his transgressions, was more prone to blunder or to look for trouble. Soon the Montreuil connection would turn against him, too.

Liberated and assigned to residence at Lacoste, the marquis promptly seduced his wife's younger, prettier sister—Anne-Prospère—a canoness imbued with religious principles, hence ideal for profaning precarious purities. "Incest, profanation, blasphemy, sacrilege," comments Lever, "everything conspired to stimulate Donatien's erotic reveries." From revery to action, the step was soon taken. Yet, even so, he traveled to Marseille and nearly killed a couple of prostitutes by feeding them candies of aniseed and Spanish fly "to make them fart and take the wind in his mouth." Cantharides are aphrodisiac, but they are also toxic—highly toxic in the doses that Sade forced on his hired prey. But why spare such "vile creatures" in the quest for pleasure?

This time caprice was going to be punished, though not harshly yet. The penalty for sodomy being death by fire, Sade and his valet were executed in effigy on the marketplace of Aix, beheaded and then burned, while they themselves, accompanied by the complaisant Anne-Prospère, traveled in Italy. More prisons followed, escapes, hiding under cover, until the ascension of a new king and a new clique in government allowed the errant profligate to settle at Lacoste once more. By then his wife had become his chief procuress, helping him hire an assortment of juveniles in their early teens to tickle his fancy.

Their rental was less ruinous than his passion for theater, which he indulged with visiting actors in the Vaucluse château. As at Louis-le-Grand, theater suggested a degree of order, ritualization and codification that could intensify erotic experiences. The traffic of the stage easily turned into a theater of lust. The trouble was that in real life, acts have real consequences, even if rarely. When irate parents, though low born, began to reclaim their children, when pregnant women from the castle took refuge with the local priest and the police bestirred themselves once more, Donatien and Anne-Prospère took off for Italy a second time. There the marquis, introduced by Cardinal de Bernis, an old *roué* who once shared two Venetian nuns with Casanova, may have obtained a private audience with Pius VI.

Friendly authorities at home tried to tamp down the latest scandal, but unfriendly authorities proved more influential now that the mother-in-law, incensed by the tampering with Anne-Prospère, who was supposed to wed an archbishop's nephew, took their side. Indulgence had left Sade incorrigibly self-indulgent. Now the dilettante would become a connoisseur of prisons. In 1777 he was returned to Vincennes, escaped and was brought back. There and in the Bastille he remained until 1790, treated with the respect due to his station: a room with a view whenever possible, furnished to taste and with his valet in the adjoining cell, fire in the fireplace, errands run by the turnkey, food on order. All of it, of course, at his own expense, meaning that of his wife's family. Renée-Pélagie meanwhile attended to his comforts: clothing run up by his regular tailor, patés, macaroons, marshmallows, chocolates and other sugary debauches, a doughnut-shaped pillow for his hemorrhoidal seat, above all artificial organs made to order for use in simulating sodomization.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

This was where fantasy came in handy. By December 1780, twenty-seven months after returning to Vincennes, the prisoner had computed "6600 introductions." Masturbation apart—that infamous habit born of indolence and idleness, as the *Encyclopédie* described it—prison bred bulimia for reading and for writing. Confinement revived childhood memories of fortress, dungeon, convent, citadel that were to shape the craggy keep of Silling where *120 Days of Sodom* would unfold. Much of the writing, though, consisted of plays, essays and travelogues, fifteen octavo volumes by 1788 alone.

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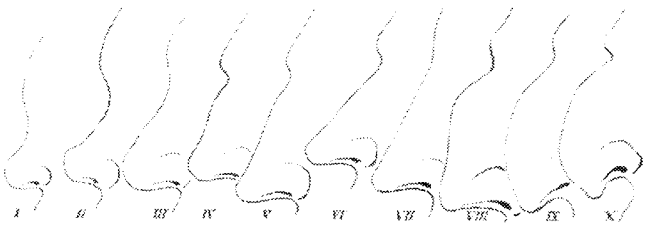
Cantankerous, finicky, quarrelsome, our loon had, by 1784, been moved to the Bastille. There, on July 2, 1789, vexed by the cancellation of his daily stroll, he picked up the great funnel used for emptying his chamber pot into the moat and, using it as a megaphone, began to shout through his cell window to the folk below that prisoners' throats were being cut. That same night he was spirited off to the lunatic asylum at Charenton; and so, when the Paris crowd ran amok through the Bastille a few days later, Sade missed the pillaging of his cell. Finally, in 1790, he was released: ruined, obese, abandoned by a wife weary of sticking with him.

But he soon found another compassionate companion, and he adjusted to the changed and rapidly changing world around him. He had always dreamed of a regime without law. What he got was first the family seat at Lacoste pillaged and vandalized by ungrateful vassals, then what Lever calls "the patriotic farce" in which he played his part, finally the orgy of *sans culotte* lyricism and bureaucratic tyranny that we call "the Terror." Arbitrary power now hid behind a fiction of equal laws for all, but the ideals of the new order—equality, happiness, social hygiene, diminished suffering—challenged Sade's archaic ideas: sin, punishment, dominance, fear. Terror fascinated him, but state terror based on cold virtue made him uneasy. Designed less to inflict pain than to minimize it, the guillotine was not the sort of machine that he liked. And soon it threatened his life. The erstwhile aristocrat had become citizen Louis Sade, eventually president of his local revolutionary section, but his reputation and his writings denounced him for what he was. Libertinism disgusted the virtuous; atheism was an aristocratic provocation. Arrested at the height of the Terror, he was saved by Thermidor to produce what Lever extols as "the most freewheeling literary oeuvre the world has ever known."

Insanely profligate, borrowing and squandering, Sade had to write to eat. He poured out novels, essays, stories, plays, agnostic speculations, didactic dialogues interspersed with erotic scenes. Sex sold well, eroticism and politics meshed, ribald pamphlets exposed the alleged perversions of public figures. Sade despised pornographers: he knew that they did not know what they wrote about. He did know, and proved it: *Justine* and *Juliette* would be his passports to fame, but also to renewed incarceration. His pornography was neither frivolous nor diverting: arson, poisonings, cannibalism, coprophilia, necrophilia, virgin



German physiognomist Carl Huter's 1904 study of the nose and its relation to character and beauty. The scale runs from the child's nose (I) to the nose of the Jew (X). The "German" nose (IV) is the norm.

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martyrs fed to beasts, fully equipped torture chambers, murder machines for mass extermination, repulsive reveries run riot on the page. The Bastard in Shakespeare's *King John* bent himself "to deliver / sweet, sweet, sweet poison for the age's tooth." But Sade's poison was tart and astringent; it set the teeth on edge and was in the end self-defeating. The extravagance of his situations inhibited desire; the sexual contortions handicapped performance; subversion went beyond obscenity to scandalize and to frighten. In writing, Roland Barthes once explained, shit does not smell, but Sade's scatological violence did not titillate the senses as much as vandalize them. It induced a cauterization of the heart.

Eroticism, though, was simply packaging. The philosophical contents were more dissolvent still. Good and bad are relative, in Sade's world. Vice is energy, virtue weakness. In a material universe, the only reward to hope for is physical pleasure. In pornotopia, fulfillment is achieved at the expense of others, sexual freedom asserted by restricting the sexual freedom of others. Nature is ruthless, its essence is crime, the only way to adapt to nature is to follow the example that it sets. Fraternity is a defensive illusion invented by the feeble: no bond exists between man and man, except the possibility of one using the other. Our fellow men are prey, or objects of our pleasure, or accomplices. But even Sade's wolves devour each other. To right-thinking folk in times that still believed it possible to think right, this was subversive madness, and dangerously contagious. It was not just that Sade was mad, but that the moral contamination of his work could easily drive others to madness. In 1801, Napoleon had the odd duck, no use to man or beast, reimprisoned as arbitrarily as he had been under the Old Regime.

His libertine dementia (that is, his persistent attentions to young men) got the elderly gentleman transferred from the disaffected convent of Sainte-Pélagie to the asylum of Bicêtre, and then to Charenton, where he ended his life. It was at Charenton that Sade came into his own as playwright, actor, producer and stage designer of a little theater, attending which became the height of chic. Too fashionable with the *fashionables*, it was closed after seven years by order of the emperor. But Sade soldiered on. In 1814, 84 years old and still masturbating, he received regular visits from a young girl and from a lad equally juvenile. A haughty, morose old nobleman, he died on December 2 that year, five days after jotting down the count of his recent couplings: ninety-six.

For Maurice Lever, the man was "a prisoner of some blundering force within him, which drove him inexorably to the edge of the abyss." For one who admires him less, Sade's self-indulgent excesses seem those of a spoiled child of his class, volatile, hot-tempered, vociferously impatient at the slightest delay in satisfying a whim, given to raging tantrums, vapors and faints; and his philosophy reads like a rationalization of his self-regard. For Sade himself, the explanation is simpler: "*Je suis philosophe*," he wrote from Charenton in 1803. Taken at his word, he seems to out-Hobb Hobbes, and his own life turned out like that of Hobbesian man in the state of nature: not short, alas, but solitary, nasty and brutish.

His afterlife, however, was another thing, and it raises certain questions that Lever does not address. Whence Sade's prestige? Acceptable prose, unplayable plays, dubious verse, pickpocket philosophies provide scant explanation. Twenty years after he died and after his confiscated "literary monument," *The Colloquies of Florabelle*, was burned at his son's behest, "sadism" appeared in a dictionary of 1834. By 1843, Sainte-Beuve, the major literary critic of his day, coupled Sade's name with Byron's as one of the two great inspirations of the modern world. The strange joinder with Byron provides a hint. Both men worshiped fallen angels and liked to play that role. Both were romantics, representatives of excess, harbingers of rebellion and of that fat boys' revolt "born of indolence and idleness," just like masturbation, that is characteristic of modern times. Like Byron's Lara, born in the very year Sade died, the marquis was "a thing of dark imaginings, that shaped / By choice the perils he by chance escaped." Like Lara, his "strange perversity of thought ... swayed him onward with a secret pride / To do what few or none would do beside; / And this same impulse would, in tempting time / Mislead his spirit equally to crime..."

Transgression was the better part of valor; it testified to what Apollinaire would call "the freest spirit that ever was." At odds with restraints, disciplines, hypocrisies, Sadean provocation was inspiration enough, along with Sadean demoralization, subversion and scandal, to turn a debauched parasite obsessed with kinky sex into a model for our own century's self-indulgent rebels.

"The cause of my misfortunes," the marquis once wrote to his wife, "is not the way I think; it is the way others think." The way that others think has changed. In 1957, the Paris correctional court condemned Jean-Jacques Pauvert for publishing Sade's works, which it ordered confiscated and destroyed; but by 1964, a fifteen-volume luxury edition preceded the publication of Sade's complete collected works. Lever's biography, not the first but the fullest, demonstrates that old transgressions can be neutralized by scholarship. The work of a distinguished veteran of Sadean studies, it is serious, sympathetic and thorough; and if it seems repetitious, that is only because its hero was accident prone. Arthur Goldhammer, who is responsible for the elegant translation, has wisely abridged the original into a highly readable text.

EUGEN WEBER is the author most recently of *My France* (Harvard University Press) and *Movements, Currents, Trends* (D.C. Heath).

Speak, Memory

BY MOSHE HALBERTAL

The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust by Tom Segev

(Hill & Wang, 517 pp., $27.50)

Now more than ever, half a century away from the terrible events, and in radically different conditions of power and independence, the memory of the destruction of European Jewry has become a major factor in the shaping of Israeli identity. The changing ways in which the catastrophe is commemorated and narrated in Israel express the highly ambivalent attitude of Zionism to its roots in exile, and to the Jewish experience of exile. The classical Zionist hope to "normalize" the relationship of the Jews to the world, to transform Jews into a nation among the nations, is still cruelly defied by the overwhelming presence of the Holocaust. And so Tom Segev's powerful book is also an important one. It masters the

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painful complexities of its subject. Segev has a gift for vivid details. He has managed to make a fluent and interesting narrative out of a mountain of materials, ranging from the arrival of the German Jews in Palestine before the war, through the controversy over reparations and the Kastner trial in the '50s, to the Eichmann trial of the '60s, and finally to the response to the Holocaust in contemporary Israel.

The story begins with silence. Immediately after the war, and during the '50s, there was no effort to organize a collective form of memory. The silence of Israelis and survivors in Israel should not be confused, of course, with forgetfulness. Forgetfulness was impossible. The silence, rather, was a form of response. The reasons for it had to do with the complicated relations of the 400,000 Israelis, who were born in Palestine or came there before the war, with the Jewish experience of exile, and with the 200,000 survivors of the near-extermination who reached Israel's shores. Israelis furiously rejected the diaspora past, which impeded the creation of a "new Jew," a Jew who would never be led again to his or her death without resistance or (in the particularly brutal cliché of the time) "like a lamb to slaughter."

These feelings of rejection were especially strong among the second or third generation of Israelis or Palestine-born Jews. They no longer had direct ties to Europe. "Our children," wrote an educator in Palestine in a magazine for teachers, "read and hear much about the destruction of the exile, about the atrocities committed against our brothers and the suffering of the Jews under occupation, yet their hearts are hard and uncaring about it all." This hardness of heart, moreover, was not a source of shame: "Our youth are proud and upright in stance and spirit. They believe in their strength and know its value. They love freedom, desire space and liberty and will not tolerate humiliation or repression." Survivors were looked upon as evidence of a disgraceful and disturbing past, and as raw material to be reshaped by the new national present, transformed from passive victims into self-reliant pioneers. Haim Nachman Bialik, Israel's national poet, had already expressed the canonical nationalist response in a poem about the victims of an earlier pogrom: "They fled like mice, hid like bugs and died like dogs over there wherever they were found."

It is important to understand, however, that the silence was also self-imposed by the survivors themselves. The memory was not only unbearable, it was also ineffable. Silence punctuated by

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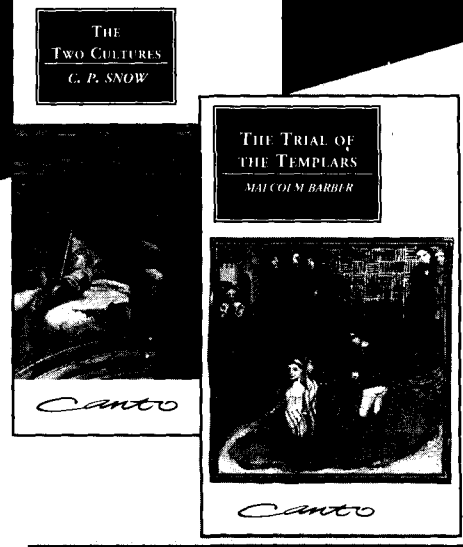

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sighs was the survivors' only medium of expression. Anyway, when they wanted to talk, nobody would listen. Their survival was looked upon almost as suspect: How could they have come away from concentration camps without somehow collaborating, or at least behaving ruthlessly?

Beneath the ideological rejection of the diaspora, moreover, was a layer of local guilt, and it, too, played a significant role in the repression of the Holocaust in the '50s. Where was the Yishuv, the pre-state Jewish community of Palestine, when millions of Jews were massacred in Europe? Israelis did not want to be reminded of their failure to have done more, of their absorption in themselves and their cause, not least because they insisted that their self-absorption was a consequence of their self-reliance.

Could the Yishuv have done more? The Israeli historian Dina Porat concluded in an important study (which appeared in English a few years ago in an abridged version called *The Blue and the Yellow Stars of David*, published by Harvard University Press) that 400,000 Jews cut off from Europe in a hostile Levantine environment were about as helpless as their brethren in Europe. Rommel was advancing on the North African front, there was imminent danger to the Yishuv and nobody in Palestine at the time had any illusion that the few armed forces of the Jewish community could stop the Germans. In one of the plans that was prepared in anticipation of a Nazi conquest of Palestine, all the fighting forces of the Yishuv would gather on Mount Carmel to fight to the death, making the mountain a modern Masada. Other methods of saving European Jews, such as trading supplies to the German army for Jews, were never seriously considered, not least because their implementation depended on the Allies' concern for European Jewry, a group whose fate was a low priority in the war effort.

Porat's conclusion is very reasonable. The Yishuv did more or less what it could do. It was strong enough to secure its own survival, but it was not very strong. (In the War of Independence in 1948, three years after the Holocaust, the Yishuv lost 6,000 soldiers, that is to say, 1 percent of its population.) Still, there is another troubling matter raised by Segev's book. When the news concerning the annihilation of Jewish communities in Europe spread in Palestine, life did not seem to change its regular course. The cafés of Tel Aviv were packed as usual, and the daily newspapers began after a while to bury news from Europe between sports stories or reports of political infighting at the Jewish Agency. When asked by the poet and journalist Haim Gouri what would have happened had the Yishuv dispatched 500 paratroopers to the ghetto, Yitzhak Zuckerman, one of the leaders of the revolt in the Warsaw Ghetto, answered: "490 would have been killed and the ten remaining would have been an additional burden on the ghetto." This, of course, did not absolve the Yishuv. "They did not need 500 paratroopers," explained Gouri, "they needed only one man who would bring them a word of goodwill from the land of Israel, just one man. And he did not come." The trapped Jew of the ghetto did not expect the Yishuv to save him from hell; he expected the Yishuv merely to make him feel less lonely there. And that it did not do.

Might it be that the Yishuv was ideologically and psychologically complicit with the catastrophe, since so much of Zionism was founded on the certainty that Jews had no future in Europe, that the emancipation of the Jews would fail, that the only solution to European anti-Semitism was a sovereign Jewish state? It was almost as if Zionism had accepted the end of European Jewry before it happened. Segev eloquently describes this mood: "It was the inclination to ease the murder of the Jews out of the present into the past—and so to move beyond it." David Ben-Gurion had read *Mein Kampf* before the war and predicted a disaster. It was clear to him that the diaspora was doomed. But the question that exercised him was whether anything or anybody would remain to help in the effort to establish the independent Jewish state.

Segev adduces a painful argument in the Rescue Committee of the Jewish Agency in 1943, when the Nazi death machine was operating at full power. Rabbi Yitzhak Itshe Meir Levin, a leader of the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael, argued: "Take the Jewish National Fund money.... Won't you halt the work in Palestine during such a period, when they are murdering and slaughtering Jews by the hundreds of thousands, even millions? Don't establish new settlements; take the money for those needs." To which Yitzhak Gruenbaum, the head of this committee and a former leader of Zionist Polish Jewry, replied: "I think it is necessary to state here—Zionism is above everything." Another committee member, Yosef Sprinzak, objected: "What do we need at this moment? Not a Zionist program but something very simple: *a varm Yiddish hartz* [in Yiddish, 'a warm Yiddish heart']...." To which Gruenbaum, who had a son somewhere in Poland who later died in Aushwitz, replied: "They will say that I am anti-Semitic, that I don't want to save the exile, that I don't have a *varm Yiddish hartz*.... Let them say what they want. I will not demand that the Jewish Agency allocate a sum of 300,000 or 100,000 pounds sterling to help European Jewry. And I think that whoever demands such things is performing an anti-Zionist act."

This Zionist outlook on the Jewish past and the Jewish future was a decidedly one-dimensional view, dominated by a single epic concern: How could Jewish life be taken from exile to independence? The effort to accomplish this transformation was enormous; and it colored, somewhat tragically, both the Yishuv's response to the Holocaust and its subsequent repression of the memory of the Holocaust. "I was not well-informed at the time in the matter of saving Jews under Nazi occupation," wrote Ben-Gurion. "Although I was the chairman of the Jewish Agency executive, the enlistment of the Jewish people in the demand for the Jewish state was at the center of my activity." For a determined, politically minded Zionist like Ben-Gurion, mourning was a perverse luxury, and dangerously paralyzing. Moreover, mourning as a response to national suffering seemed to him like a repetition of the old Jewish passivity. A new page had to be opened, and the rest was the past.

Is there any doubt that such single-mindedness was necessary for such a revolution? And in reflecting on the response of Zionism to the Holocaust, it is also important to observe that in a profound sense the Holocaust vindicated Zionism, or at least its pessimism about the place of the Jews in Europe. The Jewish national movement succeeded in establishing a Jewish state in spite of the Jewish national trauma. The Jewish state was an extraordinary proof of vitality in the wake of annihilation.

There were two ideological alternatives to Zionism in Europe before the war, and both of them failed. The first was integrationist, the second was religious. Integrationism took many political and cultural forms. It was the solution of those Jews who wanted to find a place as loyal citizens of the European nations, some of them with the hope of assimilating completely. There were also Jews, notably the German Jewish philosophers Herman Cohen and Franz Rosenzweig, who wanted to integrate as citizens and to maintain their spiritual difference as Jews. Other Jews preferred the more radical integrationist path of communism and social revolution. The vehement secularism of the

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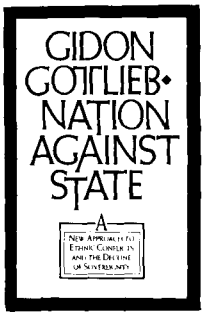
Marxists promised to free Jews from the burden of Christian anti-Semitism. And in this instance, too, there were those who were not willing to surrender all of their identity. The powerful group of Jewish socialists known as the Bundists insisted on the legitimacy of Jewish particularism; they aimed at achieving national autonomy of a secularist and Yiddishist kind within the general workers' movement, but they led a relentless campaign against Zionism.

The other ideological alternative to Zionism came from a completely different source, the Orthodox and their ultras. The Orthodox camp resisted the integrationist approach, which was perceived as a threat to the ability of the Jewish people to preserve its traditional form of life, the life of Torah. But the Orthodox also rejected Zionism on two grounds: Zionism was a dangerous form of secularism, and Zionism was a rebellion against God's plan for Israel. The Jews were to wait for the messiah to extract them from their diaspora, but Herzl was not the messiah. The daring, activist politics of Jewish nationalism posed a threat to Jewish survival; according to the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael, the Jews ought to keep a political low profile until the "end of the days." The most quoted prooftext in the Talmud for this political mentality is a rabbinic commentary on a verse in the *Song of Songs*, according to which God placed Israel under two oaths, that it would not rebel against the nations and that it would not "force the end." (There was a third oath, according to the Talmud, this one sworn by the nations, that they would not enslave Israel too much.) But Hitler appeared before the messiah. The failure of both anti-Zionist ideologies of pre-war Europe, the integrationist and the religious, became plain. And it became plain, too, that Zionism had come too late.

It is one of the flaws of Segev's book that his own attitude to Zionism is never quite clear, not least because he never discusses the ideological alternatives to Zionism; he prefers adding adjectives to making judgments. Yet he is perfectly correct to claim that it was the trial of Adolf Eichmann in 1961 that broke the silence, that was the turning point in the reception of the catastrophe in the Jewish state. Eichmann rather swiftly became peripheral to his own trial, which was deliberately designed to focus more comprehensively on the Nazi crime against the Jews. The trial was the first time that the detailed testimony of survivors was heard in public. It was on the radio everywhere, in buses, in restau-



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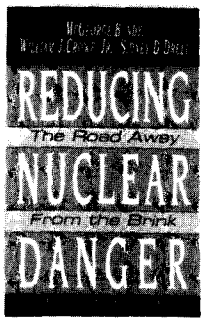

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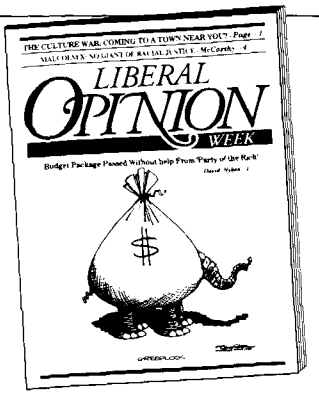

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rants, in schools. This time, and much too late, the balance of power had shifted: the Jews could finally bring their persecutor to trial, and they could execute him. Suddenly the presentation of Jewish memory was a proof of Jewish strength, not of Jewish weakness.

There were objections, of course, to the trial. Some argued that Israel was the wrong place and the wrong authority, because victims could not serve fairly as judges. (The noble decision of the Israeli Supreme Court to acquit John Demjanjuk is an impressive refutation of this objection.) Others argued that Eichmann should have been tried by an international tribunal, since the Nazis had killed also Poles, Gypsies, homosexuals and many other non-Jews. And there was an internecine Jewish objection, too, which worried about the portrayal of the victims. The leadership of the American Jewish Congress protested the prerogative of the state of Israel to speak for all of world Jewry; many survivors lived in the United States, in the largest Jewish community in the world, and the venue in Jerusalem seemed to imply that the the Holocaust had rendered the diaspora, as an independent and alternative form of Jewish life, obsolete.

That, in fact, was Ben-Gurion's view, as he expressed it to one of the leaders of the American Jewish Congress:

> The Jewish state (which is called Israel) is the heir of the 6 million who were murdered, the only heir, for these millions ... regarded themselves as the sons of the Jewish people and only as sons of the Jewish people. If they had lived the great majority of them would have come to Israel, and for reasons of historic justice, it is the duty of the Israeli government, as the government of the Jewish state whose foundations were laid by millions of European Jews and whose establishment was their dearest hope, to try their murderers.

Ben-Gurion was a practical man, but he was guided by a powerful myth, a myth that was owed to the vexing nearness in time and in place of the destruction of Europe's Jews to the creation of the Jewish state. In such a reading of the events of the '30s and '40s, the Jews killed by the Nazis had been stopped in the middle of their journey to Palestine. Israel was thus the culmination of an unfinished journey, and so it could speak for the dead. There was also a biblical resonance to this myth of the journey: the Jews in exile were like the Israelites who wandered forty years in the desert and never lived to see the promised land. Their children in Palestine became their heirs, their representatives.

This is the historical picture that shapes a good deal of the narrative in which the memory of the Holocaust in Israel is framed. Thus, in Yad Va-shem, the central memorial, the official memorial, to the Holocaust in Israel, the terrifying exhibition about the concentration camps ends with a huge picture of a boat carrying illegal immigrants to Palestine. In the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, by contrast, the historical teleology is doubled: its exhibition ends with Palestine *and* America. But the Zionists could not tolerate a pluralism of sanctuaries. It constituted a challenge to their reading of Jewish history.

Sometimes Ben-Gurion's vision is taken further, all the way to the insistence that the linkage between the catastrophe and the state was not only symbolic, but also causal. The foundation of Israel, it is often claimed, was laid by the millions who were murdered. At this point commemoration collapses into appropriation. For it is a fact of history that many of those doomed Jews did *not* see their own lives as a journey, or the diaspora as a temporary stage before a return to the land. Many of them wanted to be accepted into the societies in which they lived, or at least to live in those societies in peace. Others, notably the Orthodox who lived with the consciousness of the temporality of diaspora and the expectation of a second exodus, hardly saw Ben-Gurion as their Moses. And so the canonical Zionist account of the Jewish past is an extraordinary simplification, a one-dimensional reading of a multidimensional story which has the effect of depleting Jewish history of virtually two millennia of creativity and vitality.

The same exaggeration and appropriation has also distorted the Israeli account of Jewish revolt in Hitler's Europe. *Shoah v'gvurah*, "Holocaust and Resistance," is how the events are called, not least in the name of the official day of remembrance. In truth, however, there was little Jewish revolt against the Nazis, certainly when compared with the scale of Jewish destruction. This need to add heroism to holocaust issues from a reluctance to remember the Jews as they really were, as frightened and helpless as most men and women would be in similar circumstances. Moreover, the Zionist conception of heroism as armed revolt already assumed a change in Jewish values; but for ultra-Orthodox figures such as Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman, the greatest rabbinic authority of pre-war Europe, heroism meant something radically different from armed revolt. For Wasserman, it meant the ability to stand fast in one's faith in the face of cruelty and chaos. In 1941, before its members were deported to their deaths, he assembled the Jewish community of Kovno to declare its loyalty to its faith in utter defiance of its condition. For the believers, martyrdom was heroism. For the Zionists, martyrdom was the opposite of heroism.

Segev shows that in the years following the Eichmann trial, and especially after the Six-Day War in 1967 and the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the grip of those readings on Israeli consciousness was weakened. The gap between the old Jew and the new Jew had been narrowed. The elite of Labor Zionism lost its power, not least to immigrants who came to Israel in the '50s and did not share the ethos of the "new Jew." For these Jews from the Arab lands, immigration to Israel seemed much more continuous with their past. The ongoing struggle with the Arab world contributed to the feeling that Israel did not completely guarantee a safe haven to the Jews, that Jewish fate had not been completely altered and "normalized," that the Jewish state was itself a ghetto in the Middle East, though an armed one. Segev quotes Colonel Ehud Prawer, deputy chief education officer in the Israeli army, in the aftermath of the Yom Kippur war:

> In school we had been mesmerized by the Resistance. We were really spellbound by the idea that "we" were the Resistance, even though we hadn't been born, and that "they" were the lambs who went to be slaughtered. Suddenly that was cracked, too—we needed the support of American Jews ... it wasn't just that we needed financial support; that was normal. We needed political support. Without the Americans, we realized we would not hold out. We felt totally isolated: the country was about to be destroyed and no one had stepped forward. That was the basis for our identification with those very people whom we had despised.... Until then we believed in the pairing of the words Holocaust and heroism and identified ourselves with heroism. The war made us realize the meaning of the Holocaust and the limitations of heroism.

The anxieties of exile were still alive.

Even within Israel, however, the Zionist way of structuring and interpreting the great national drama of the '40s was not the only way. Other significant ideologies managed to integrate the stormy events into their worldviews. The most striking of these other readings is the religious response to the Holocaust in the ultra-Orthodox anti-Zionist groups. There the Holocaust is perceived, not surprisingly, as the most horrible continuation, but still the continuation, of

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exile. The ultra-Orthodox literature never mentions the term *shoah* in reference to the catastrophe; it is denoted instead by the Hebrew terms *gzerah*, *pur'anut* and *churban*, "decree," "retribution" and "destruction," the terms that are used in the tradition to describe other tribulations in exile, such as the Crusades in 1096 or the Ukrainian massacres in 1648.

In keeping the Holocaust within the old theological and historical confines of exile, the ultra-Orthodox thinkers can make excellent use of the rich vocabulary that was developed to make sense of 2,000 years of suffering in exile by previous generations. In some ways the Holocaust was unique, but in some ways it was not all unique; and the precedents of Jewish history served to master the memory of the Holocaust by absorbing it into the canonical explanations of exile. The most familiar of these explanations, and the most provocative, is the punitive one, the view of the Holocaust as punishment, especially for modern Jewish heresies such as assimilation and Zionism.

Thus the infamous and intellectually powerful Satmar rebbe, Rabbi Moshe Teitelbaum, who was himself rescued from Hungary by the Zionists, cited the rise of Zionism before the war as the cause of the divine punishment of the Jews in the war. The Jews, he thundered, did not keep their oath not to rebel against the nations, preferring to establish a national movement of their own, and so the nations did not keep their oath not to enslave Israel too much. For an anti-Zionist such as Teitelbaum, the Holocaust was not the sign of Zionism's failure, but the price of Zionism's success.

The exactly opposite and equally perverse view was expressed by Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, the spiritual leader of radical religious Zionism and the mentor of the Gush Emunim:

> The people of Israel were taken, cut from the depth of exile to the state of Israel. The spilling of blood of 6 million, this was a real cut in the nation's body. The whole nation received a divine surgery.... God's nation had cleaved so much to the defilement of the land of the nations [diaspora] that when the time of redemption arrived it [the nation] had to be cut and taken away from it with bloodshed.... From this cruel cut... the essence of our life appeared; the revival of the nation, the revival of the land of Torah and of the sacred.

For Kook, the catastrophe in Europe was the apocalyptic purging of diaspora from the Jewish soul. It had a use, it was a necessary step before the next stage in the eschatological plan. This is a perverse answer to the haunting problem of theodicy after Auschwitz. How could an omnipotent and benevolent God allow

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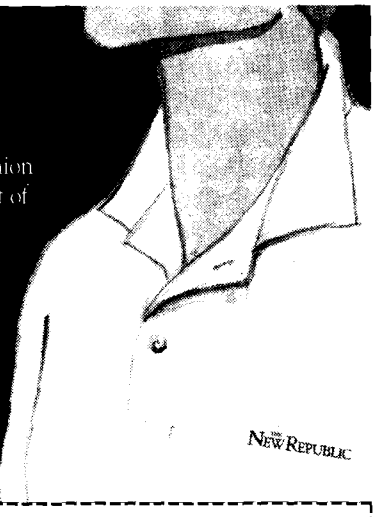

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such a thing to happen? Kook showed how. But surely the honest complaint of Job is preferable to the hypocritical certainties of his friends.

The Holocaust has not yet left a truly significant trace in Jewish religious thinking. It has certainly not provoked any theological speculation of the magnitude of the sixteenth-century mysticism of Isaac Luria, which was, in Gershom Scholem's famous account, a response to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain. Perhaps the religious imagination cannot deal with the event honestly without destroying itself, without a radical revision in its modes of thought.

The interpretations of the Holocaust also had political uses. It is a sobering and somewhat repulsive spectacle, and it is clearly presented in the last chapters of Segev's book. Both the right and the left have been guilty of exploitation. For the same event seems to reinforce opposite political outlooks. In 1982, for example, on the eve of the war in Lebanon, Menachem Begin told his Cabinet: "You know what I have done and what we have all done to prevent war and loss of life. But such is our fate in Israel. There is no way other than to fight selflessly. Believe me, the alternative is Treblinka." Such a commemoration enforces the hawkish psychology of paranoia corrected by aggression. It teaches that the world cannot be trusted, that Hitler and Arafat are interchangeable. It is also handy for relaxing the moral demands made on Israel, not least by many Israelis themselves, in its handling of its security problems. After the Holocaust, it is said, Israel owes nothing to anybody. For nothing that the Jews do compares to what was done to the Jews. "No one anywhere in the world can preach morality to our people," said Begin in the Knesset.

The Israeli left is correct in insisting that this is a politically suicidal use of memory, that forgetfulness would better serve the national interest than fatalism. But the use of the Holocaust by the left is also trivializing and questionable. According to Yair Tsaban, one of the leaders of the Israeli left, the main lesson of the Holocaust is

> to stand on guard, to be awakened to any phenomenon of the erosion of the democracy, to any inclination toward totalitarianism of any kind ... and there is yet another lesson. The terrible consequence of the combination of the destruction of democracy and the rise of totalitarianism with the malignant growth of nationalistic frenzy.

Instead of isolationism and a belief in raw power, Israel in the wake of the Holocaust must exemplify a universalist sensitivity to tyranny and human misery. For in the absence of the proper constraints of a democratic regime, any polity is capable of extreme barbarism. And so ridiculous allusions to Nazism appear in some of the left's criticisms of Israeli policy in the territories, and parties of the extreme right are commonly compared to the Nazis. Is it really necessary to say yet again that there is an enormous difference between authoritarianism and Nazism, between outbursts of racism and its adoption as the creed of a people and a state, between cruelty and genocide?

The memory of the Holocaust should be banished from political discourse. For the memory of such a nightmare is deranging. A political system cannot sanely function with Auschwitz as one of its central terms. If there are political lessons to be learned from the Holocaust, let the criminals ponder them, not the victims. The rise of Nazism should be the occasion for introspection in Germany, not in Israel.

If not the political lesson, then what lesson? The lesson of loss. Jews ought to remember what they lost, for they lost a great deal. Mourning over the dead is an expression of the feeling that the dead left a trace, that the dead are missed. Without such a feeling, the value of life is put in question. If a man dies and nobody pauses to mourn him, then his life is made weightless, and redundant, and replaceable. For this reason, Jewish law prescribes that if a person dies leaving no relatives to mourn, the community must mourn. Mourning is, strictly speaking, an exercise in memory.

And memory requires that we remember not only the death, but also the life, of the Jewish communities of Europe. The many monuments, museums, memorials and ceremonies commemorating the Holocaust are dominated, almost all of them, by the account of the manner in which Jewish communities were destroyed. The manner in which they flourished prior to the destruction is overlooked and overshadowed. The Jews who came within Hitler's reach are introduced as prisoners and then as dead. We see them frightened, abused, humiliated, beaten, gassed and burned; but we are given little or no glimpse of their astonishing achievements, private and public, individual and collective.

In recent years, Israeli youth have begun to visit Poland in organized groups as part of the attempt to teach the terrible past to the new generation. It is a powerful experience, a kind of morbid secular pilgrimage to the national hell. The students learn about the history of the Holocaust; they become acquainted with the details of the Final Solution and of life (or rather, "life") in the concentration camps. If you ask these students,

Late

Haunting me at midnight,
a harvester fly, as if
mating with its shadow on the
white ceiling, tells
horror stories about angels.

Its faceless dance has no
individuality. Describe
the identity of that harvester fly?
You can't conceive of such a thing.

Frantic oarlike wings and
six long jointed legs—
awkward to carry—
make a star of it.

For love of light
it immolates the body. No,
it dies in the spider's net—
a root now in the undersoil
of being, not being.

To write of this is the art
of someone who will not
arrive at selflessness,
the fly's, the spider's.

But look at my generosity,
for am I not the one
who provides the ceiling?
And the word for ceiling?

Is there anybody there?
In the fan of stars
opening beyond the ceiling?
In the bloated spider,
in the knot that's now the harvested fly?

ANNE STEVENSON

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however, what Polish Jewry was like in, say, 1937, they will have very little to say. Nobody has thought to expose them to the richness of the Jewish world that the Nazis extinguished: to the great Lithuanian academies and the great Hasidic courts, and to their teachings; to the Yiddish language and its extraordinary literature; to the Jewish engagement with liberalism and socialism; to the Jewish contribution to science and culture in Europe.

When I was first taken to Yad Va-shem as a child, I saw a picture of a group of Jewish women standing naked before Nazi guns and awaiting execution. This photograph made me reluctant to visit Yad Va-shem again, because in my parents' house there is a single picture of my grandmother who perished in the Holocaust, and I feared that I might see my grandmother among the naked women. I knew that she would not have wished to be seen in such a manner, and I did not wish to sin against her memory. The picture in Yad Va-shem was not only a document, it was also an obscenity, and I refused to be fascinated by it.

Even after the Holocaust, Jewish identity must not be formulated in a negative way. A Jewish identity based on catastrophe is a Jewish identity owed to anti-Semitism, an outward identity, a slim identity, a reactive identity. But the Jews were not committed to their own continuity merely because there were those who wanted to annihilate them. They had something, they created something, that was itself, in its own terms, worth continuing and creating. And what was that? For the answer to that question, we must remember not only how we lost, but what we lost.

MOSHE HALBERTAL is the author, with Avishai Margalit, of *Idolatry* (Harvard University Press).

Wrong Notes

BY STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Body and Soul by Frank Conroy

(Houghton Mifflin/Seymour Lawrence, 444 pp., $22.95)

In 1967, at the age of 31, Frank Conroy published *Stop-Time*. It was his first book, yet it was an autobiography—so prismatically conceived in sharp facets, so intense in its view of experience and of words themselves, that it marked the appearance of an arresting writer. Admirers (like myself) then kept watching down the road for the next Conroy book. It didn't arrive until 1985: *Midair*, a slim collection of eight stories, most of which supported prior opinions of his talent without much advancing his career.

Where was the novel that, intentionally or not, he had promised? In *Stop-Time*, speaking of his seventeenth birthday, he said:

> It was around this time that I first thought of becoming a writer. In a cheap novel [that I had read] the hero was asked his profession at a cocktail party. "I'm a novelist," he said, and I remember putting the book down and thinking, my God, what a beautiful thing to be able to say.

He is now 57; at last the novel arrives, and, bitterly to report, it leaves this admirer bruised with disappointment. It's almost as if the publisher had made a mistake—sent out the wrong book with Conroy's name on it.

Body and Soul begins with a twinge of disappointment at its flat title. (The previous two books had acute titles.) The first few pages aggravate the twinge, not because they are poorly written, though some of the subsequent book is, but because they don't read like Conroy or what might have grown out of the Conroy we knew. It may be unjust to expect that he further the style of 1967, but some of the stories in *Midair*, done in a subtle refinement of that earlier style, fueled the expectation. And if Conroy deliberately decided to abandon the artist's pointillist brush, why did he pick up, of all things, something closer to the house painter's roller?

> He was to walk Third Avenue for many years, until it became so much a part of him that he didn't see it anymore. But at first it was a feast. People moving on the sidewalks, automobiles threading through the columns of the El, trucks rumbling through the striated shadows—he drank it in, his eye leaping from image to image.

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There's nothing grossly wrong with that writing, but there's nothing distinguished about it either. Would the author of *Stop-Time*—of even the first two pages of *Stop-Time*—have written "drank it in" and "leaping from image to image"?

I begin with the prose because Conroy's change of style almost predicates the choice of materials and the general approach. The story that he tells is long, complex and quintessentially familiar: the saga of an artist from childhood to manhood. Conroy has stepped into the line of the broad, full-orchestral *Entwicklungsroman*, which today is not so much a choice of form as of generations.

Sometimes such a choice by an artist can be beautiful, amplifying, as for instance when the avant-garde R. W. Fassbinder decided to film Fontane's nineteenth-century novel *Effi Briest*. But Fassbinder's old-style film showed us how much more there was to him, in sympathy and vision and technique, than we had thought. Conroy's retrospective choice, on the other hand, has diminished him: he seems murkier in perception, feebler in his language and almost devoid of the crackling electricity that made his work so welcome.

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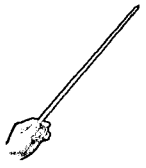

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His protagonist, Claude Rawlings, is 6 when we meet him around 1944. (Rawlings was the name of a friend in *Stop-Time*.) He lives in a dingy basement apartment on Third Avenue in Manhattan with his mother, a six-foot, 300-pound woman who drives a taxi most of the day and hardly speaks to him when she is at home swilling beer. In their apartment is an old nightclub-size piano. After investigating it, Claude makes his way to a nearby music store run by Mr. Weisfeld, a Polish-Jewish refugee from Hitler. Weisfeld knows absolutely everything about music and a good deal besides.

Through his tutelage and care, Claude's life unfolds. Weisfeld knows an old, Hungarian composer, wealthy, and he gets permission for Claude to practice regularly on a fine piano in the old man's luxurious apartment. Claude never meets the old man; nevertheless, when the composer dies, he leaves Claude a trust fund that opens further education and opportunity to him. Directly if lengthily, this beginning leads to the conclusion—when Claude steps out on the stage of Festival Hall in London some twenty years later to play the solo part in the world premiere of his piano concerto.

Along the way, much else. His mother, an ex-show girl, turns out to be a Communist sympathizer whose taxi is used by Gerhardt Eisler, at the time a well-known Communist, to get himself aboard ship for Europe in an attempt to escape prosecution. (Conroy tells us in an afterword that he has juggled some dates. Eisler's escape is one of them.) In the basement of the composer's building Claude becomes acquainted with the black super, Al, who comes to figure in his mother's life in a way that prefigures later developments in London.

Along the way, too, of course, Claude meets girls. The first one of importance is Catherine, the attractive daughter of a very rich family, who dallies with him before she elopes at 17 with someone else. Claude meets the only other girl of importance in his final college year; nicknamed Lady, this Social Register belle turns out to be Catherine's cousin. Along the way Claude also encounters a very great deal of information, mostly but not only about music. These gobs of data are sometimes so thick that the narrative seems an armature on which hang explanations of, say, the valves of brass instruments and Schönberg's twelve-tone system.

When it's not delayed by data, the story moves on wheels lubricated with coincidence. The Catherine-Lady link is only one. Al has a black friend who teaches Claude a lot about the jazz that fascinates him throughout. Al happens to have been a taxi driver in the past so that he can help Claude's mother when needed. In the last pages Claude chances to go to a London jazz club that has connections with his past. And in the neatest of all the book's many arrangements, when Lady and Claude decide to marry, she tells him that she has a trust fund of $5 million. (Sometimes the book is close to a satire on classical serendipity.)

This sense of the author as guardian angel is heightened by Claude's excellence at virtually everything he tries. Musical theory, composition, piano playing—whatever it is, he excels at it. Balanchine compliments him on his playing, Copland on his composing. He's also good at basketball and gin rummy: he can even turn "a spontaneous cartwheel." The only bad things that happen to him occur near the end. He sinks into despondency because of an incompetence that isn't his fault. Five years after his marriage to Lady, a doctor tells him that his sperm are lifeless. Eventually this leads to the breakup of the marriage and to some bleak weeks in London while his concerto is in rehearsal. But just then he meets Catherine, divorced, who is now able to respond to him. The tidiness with which he goes into and out of his slough of despond makes this penultimate episode seem like the dip-before-the-upward-finish that is a Hollywood staple.

Hollywood is otherwise manifest as well. Claude is passionate for films, and his fever seems to have infected his author. All the characters seem drawn from Movieland experience rather than from life. Claude himself is a dolled-up artifice. (We don't even really know what he looks like until late in the book.) The kindly, sagacious Weisfeld, the ignorant but deep Al, the elegant Fredericks who is Claude's principal piano teacher, the obese virtuoso violinist whom Claude accompanies on a tour, all of them seem remembered from Loew's balconies. The character whom Conroy works hardest to color, Claude's mother—gigantic, politically obsessed, once an errant show girl—is, after all the huffing and puffing, much less vivid than the father in the brief title story of *Midair*. The breath of life is not in the novel's people: Conroy merely gives them attributes that are like the springs in wind-up toys.

The author intrudes otherwise than

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as guardian angel. Most of the story is told from Claude's point of view, but Conroy breaks in frequently with overarching comments. For one example among many, Claude looks at a friend and thinks that he looks "like a dying man." Conroy then adds:

> (Which, in a sense, he was. Years later he was to leave home and go to the University of Chicago as a graduate student in history. In his small, luxurious off-campus apartment he would explode his brain with a German Luger pistol.... His body was not to be discovered for some time.)

This device not only jars our focus, not only makes us inappropriately aware of Conroy rather than Claude, it suggests a nervousness in the author, a worry that he isn't getting enough *in*, that he must enrich his book. This is quite the reverse of the earlier Conroy who exulted, quite rightly, in what he could leave out.

After all this, it can't surprise us that the dialogue is, to put it gently, not vibrant. Generally, the talk has a counterpoint of typewriter clatter or computer-screen blinking: it sounds written. Clichés float in. "You look like the cat that swallowed the canary," says Weisfeld at one point, and Conroy so likes the line that he uses it for someone else later in the book.

But the most painful dialogue, and it's plentiful, comes when Conroy tries to make the didactic material breezy. A discussion of physics:

> I mean, you go down and down, and there's the atom, protons, electrons and it doesn't matter if they're little balls or wave phenomena or whatever. Heisenberg comes in and you can't look at anything smaller because the beam of your fancy flashlight is going to knock the little thing away or change or something.

Leaden banter of this kind, applied to music and Marx and Gandhi and other topics, makes for almost physical discomfort in the reader.

Well, enough. It's a gray occasion, the arrival of this novel after such a long wait—a book that manifests no theme or point or purpose. What does Claude's story signify of character or the art he is engaged in or the epoch that he lives through? Virtually nothing. Worse, and more important whatever the aesthetics may think, the book affords almost no pleasure. It *is* possible to read it; but that's a dreadful thing to have to say about the Conroy we have been waiting on. His enthusiasts will have to wait still longer for the fulfillment of his career. •

TRB *continued from page 6*

would make consumers exquisitely price-conscious. How much effect it would have on health cost inflation is unclear, since most health care spending (and most health care inflation) involves serious illnesses that are well past the "catastrophic" threshold. But it would be more of a rude awakening for cosseted American health care consumers than anything Clinton proposes, so the proponents of this scheme are being disingenuous to present it as a cozy alternative to Clinton's nightmarish upheaval.

Above all, "We need some answers about where we'll get the money to pay for this new system. More deficit spending is unacceptable." So said Governor Carroll Campbell in the Republican reply to Clinton's big speech. But where would the Republicans get the money? On this they are also vague. They oppose requiring employers to cover the currently uninsured. They oppose new taxes. They attack Clinton's claims for potential savings in Medicare and Medicaid as unrealistic. Yet without the employer mandates, they need to find even more billions in the federal treasury than Clinton—unless the level of care they're prepared to guarantee is radically stingier, which they don't admit.

In fact the GOP Senate plan claims that reform will squeeze $210 billion from Medicare and Medicaid—nearly as much as Clinton's supposedly unrealistic $238 billion. During the budget debate last summer, nearly every Republican in Congress was calling for tough "caps" on Medicare and Medicaid spending with no explanation at all of how exactly the money was to be saved. Clinton at least has a theory.

The Senate and Gramm plans would raise more billions by limiting the tax deduction for employer-paid health insurance. (Clinton would do this too, but generally not for ten years.) It's a good idea: not only to raise revenue, but to make health care consumers more price-conscious. But there's no denying this is a—how you say?—tax increase, though the Republicans play that down.

As for the House Republicans, they claim their plan can provide universal health care for a grand total of $17 billion over five years. I think that obviates any further need to take them seriously.

By all means, though, let us work together in a spirit of compromise for the good of the country and the values we all share so that no American child and so forth and so on. But if you should faint from all this bipartisan high-mindedness and are rushed to the hospital, don't count on the GOP to take care of you.

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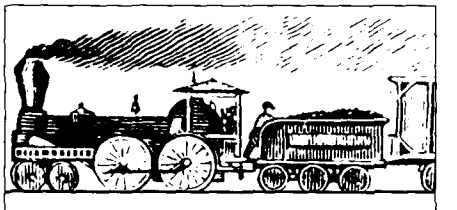

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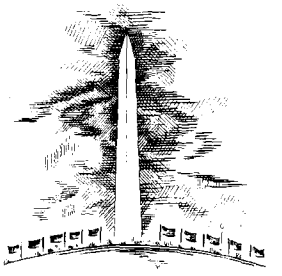
WASHINGTON DIARIST

Go West

A RECURRING FANTASY OF MINE IS one day to quit everything, disappear to Seattle, buy a Starbucks franchise and generally aim for an idea-less existence. The fantasy was helped recently by actually visiting Seattle. Although the city is now allegedly passé, there is about it—and about the Northwest in general—something irresistible for a Northern European. Its dank, red brick roughness is pleasingly familiar; the climate stirs instant Proustian frisson. Yet it is utterly different from the old countries: irony-free, still only a drive away from what's left of the old-growth forest and so recently developed it doesn't even have the marinated quirkiness of New England. Like Britain—and for the same meteorological reasons—it is essentially caffeine-dependent. But the drug of choice is not tea, it's espresso. Beaches are dark gray; where you expect copses, there are ravines; in place of British reserve, there is Northwestern conviviality. Unlike anywhere else in America, it conveys an uncanny sense of complete sameness and complete erasure of what the old world still represents. I visited an old churchyard on Lopez Island in the the San Juan archipelago: barely a hundred years old, and the tombstones faithful replicas of Victorian propriety. But the number of child deaths, the nervous clusters of family grave plots, the strange mix of English, Welsh and Norwegian names all told a radically different story. I felt moved again by the immigrant story, by its mixture of bravery and conservatism, by what America still represents, even after the cold war. To paraphrase Philip Larkin, its elsewhere underwrites the old world's existence.

I REMEMBERED THIS WHEN I WAS accosted recently by a friend just returned from Europe. He marveled at how little real debate there still was in America about the end of the cold war, compared with the rest of the world. The Japanese had ended decades of one-party rule, he elaborated. The Germans had borrowed billions to reconstruct their whole country. The Italians had fired their entire political class. The Russians embarked on a political and economic revolution. The Palestinians and Israelis in one way and the South Africans in another had taken massive risks to build what are essentially start-from-scratch states. Throughout Asia, nationalism and capitalism were being unleashed. The Americans, meanwhile, were hell-bent on HMOs.

BUT MY FRIEND MISSED THE POINT. Much of the reason, of course, for the mind-numbing pragmatism of current American politics is precisely the end of the cold war. What for other less stable—and less stably liberal—countries is an opportunity for new destinies to be pioneered is for Americans a pleasant return to banality. And here, banality *is* the destiny. The ideological battles that typified American politics for the better part of sixty years—and assumed grotesque, self-conscious forms in the last fifteen—were the stuff of which European politics were always made. But in a country where the impulse has been to erase such encrusted ideologies in favor of actual experience, there is no desire to reinvent them. That's why the election of 1992, despite providing a rich array of neo-populists, turned out to be such a conservative contest, with two anointed leaders of fast-converging party establishments cruising into the final stretch. The cacophony of lobbying that now passes for politics in Washington is the sound of this kind of politics triumphant: free from the slightest taint of principle and rid of the most marginal trace of intellectual edge. And this surely captures part of what the American idea really is: the look of Europe, but not the difficulty.



NOT THAT THERE AREN'T SOME American sideshows to the European meltdown. My favorite post-ideological irony is not the strange convergence of Richard Gephardt and Patrick Buchanan; nor the resonance that Hillary Rodham Clinton's preachiness has had with those neoconservatives who were always more interested in the uses of religion than in the difficulties of faith. It's the newfound consensus against men. Once upon a time, there was just the occasional anti-pornography alliance that joined the ex-right and the ex-left against the male libido. Now there's a full-scale merger. The strand in Catharine MacKinnon's writing (see "Obsession," by Richard Posner, page 31) that sees men as inherently depraved in their relations toward women is no longer as unrepresentative as it once was. Katha Pollitt wrote a tart piece this summer for *The New York Times* defending single-motherhood on similar lines. But the really unsettling thing (has the ex-left realized this yet?) is how this view is now fashionable in less predictable political quarters. My colleague Robert Wright (pro-NAFTA, anti-men) joins in the misanthropy with painstaking reference to DNA. Conservatives like William Tucker, in a recent issue of *National Review*, resort to socio-biological arguments about the malevolence of males in defense of monogamy. And now comes James Q. Wilson in, of all places, *The Public Interest*, virtually crippled with male self-hatred. Men are "much less amenable to socialization" than women are, he writes. They're genetically more prone to sickness, violence and self-destruction: "It seems clear that Mother Nature would much prefer to produce only girls." The same argument—a heady combination of genes and ethics—has come flying back at me each time I have vainly tried to persuade conservatives about the benefits of gay marriage. Marriage doesn't domesticate men, they uniformly bleat. *Women* domesticate men.

AS AN UNDOMESTICATED MALE, I have my personal gripe with the analysis, of course. But more interesting than the crudeness of the argument is its tone. Perhaps the most striking aspect of post-ideological argument in America is its rawness. Ideology has folded into identity, which is now teetering on the cusp of biology and religion. Gender, race, sexuality: all have the doctors and the priests hovering at the edge of the debate; and the debate itself is getting meaner and meaner. The claims of science and religion (*pace* Stephen Carter and John Neuhaus) are now at the center of our discourse—not at its periphery—and the subject matter is not at the abstract level of anti-communism or free markets, but at the gut level of personal worth. "Which side are you on?" has been replaced by "Who are you?" as the question most insistently asked. As the ideological ramparts have been removed, we have been reduced to examining the more volatile questions of our human nature. In America, where tradition weighs less heavily on argument, the result has not been a Germany, let alone a Bosnia. But it has been a personalization and crudification of argument that can only make civil society less civil. The joke of the cold war is now on those of us who longed for it to end. Ideology, it turns out, was more than an abstraction. It was also a form of etiquette.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

A Rush to Inclusion

Suppose you were a fourth-grade teacher and, along with the 30 other youngsters on your class list, you found you'd been assigned a Down's syndrome child—without any preparation and without any extra help. And this was a child who ran around hitting other kids and was not even toilet trained. How would you meet the extraordinary demands of this child without robbing the rest of your students?

Many teachers are facing this problem. Children with disabilities as severe as this—and far more severe—are turning up in regular classrooms all over the country as part of a movement called "inclusion." Since the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act in 1975, youngsters with disabilities have had a right to a "free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment." At first, this usually meant some kind of special placement, but school districts and advocates for the rights of these children are having second thoughts about segregating them.

Advocates talk about fairness and ask whether kids educated in special settings are forfeiting their chance to develop social and academic skills. School districts are asking how they can continue to foot the bill—especially since Congress has never appropriated the money to pay its share. And courts are finding that these kids have a right to be in regular classrooms. As a federal judge recently put it: "Inclusion is a right, not a privilege for a select few." So although there are special education groups who believe that a one-size-fits-all approach will be disastrous for disabled children and their classmates, we are seeing a rush to inclusion for every disabled child, regardless of the disability.

Although there are special education groups who believe that a one-size-fits-all approach will be disastrous, we are seeing a rush to inclusion for every disabled child, regardless of the disability.

Of course, a disabled child placed in a regular classroom is supposed to get special services so he can participate academically and socially and so the other kids' learning is not disrupted. That's the behind-the-scenes reality in the documentary "Educating Peter," which won an Academy Award in 1993. Filmgoers see a moving story about a child with Down's syndrome who learned to work and play with his new classmates. What filmgoers don't see is that Peter's teacher had been intensively prepared for his arrival, as had the parents of his classmates; a full-time special education aide was with Peter all day; and an "inclusion specialist" worked with him daily and was available to help his teacher and classmates.

But this kind of help is expensive and rarely provided. Instead, the responsibility for dealing with disabled kids falls on teachers and paraprofessionals, who typically have had very little training. One teacher described her preparation as "one video that showed a couple of mildly retarded students."

Who is supposed to be helped by this approach to educating disabled students? It gives these kids the "rights" they are entitled to, and for mildly disabled youngsters, or the few kids like Peter who get the support they need, it can work well. But what about severely disabled youngsters thrown into a regular classroom without this support? Will an autistic child learn to socialize with other children simply because he's been put into a class with them?

And what about the rest of the class? What happens to attempts to raise their reading or math achievement levels when their teacher has to devote extraordinary amounts of time and energy to deal with a severely disabled classmate who may never learn to read or count?

This week, I received a draft document on inclusion from the New York State Education Department. It talks about the "needs" of special education students as though they were the whole story and defines these needs exclusively in terms of placing these youngsters in a regular classroom: "Inclusion is the ultimate goal for all students with disabilities regardless of their disabilities or current placement." And "the removal of a student from the general educational environment occurs only when the needs of the student are such that, even with the use of supplementary aids and services, their needs cannot be met." What about the needs of the other students?

Our students are far behind, and we talk a lot about how we can get them to meet world-class standards. Well, no other country in the world has total inclusion. Its rapid spread constitutes a decision, based on ideology, to experiment on 40 million children—the disabled and the rest. The way it's being done now, by edicts from judges and state boards of education who have no idea of what the consequences will be, is proof that educational achievement is not their major priority. But even if they believe that advancing their social agenda is more important than raising educational achievement, the people who advocate this brand of inclusion are likely to fail when taxpayers, disgusted with the further deterioration of the public schools, turn to vouchers and private schools, and disabled children are left behind in the public schools.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1993 by Albert Shanker.

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